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THE

MONKS OF THE WEST,

FROM ST. BENEDICT TO ST. BERNARD.

BY

THE COUNT DE MONTALEMBERT,

MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

FIDE ET VERITATE.

VOL. II.

BOSTON:
THOMAS B. NOONAN & CO.

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the British Isles. — He returns to England with the Papal charter for Peterborough. — He is repulsed by the king and assembly of the Northumbrians, and then imprisoned. — Connivance of Archbishop Theodore. — Wilfrid refuses to treat with the king. — He is put in irons at Dunbar: afterwards delivered by the intervention of the Abbess Edda of Coldingham, but exiled. — Obliged to leave Mercia and Wessex, where the brothers-in-law of Egfrid reign, he takes refuge among the Saxons of the South, whom he converts to Christianity. — He teaches them to fish with nets, and frees the serfs on the domains of his new Abbey of Selsey. — His connection with the proscribed Ceadwalla, who becomes King of Wessex, and afterwards dies at Rome. — Theodore again disposes of the diocese of Wilfrid: St. Cuthbert is made bishop of Lindisfarne. — King Egfrid ravages Ireland cruelly: in spite of the entreaties of Bishop Cuthbert he invades Caledonia, and perishes there. — Queen Ermenburga, informed by Cuthbert of the death of her husband, becomes a nun. — Consequences of the defeat of Egfrid. — The Saxon bishop of the Picts takes refuge at Whitby, where Elfleda, sister of Egfrid, had succeeded Hilda. — Archbishop Theodore acknowledges his faults towards Wilfrid: he wishes to choose him as his successor: writes in his favor to the King of the Mercians and to the Abbess Elfleda. — Connection of Elfleda with Bishop Cuthbert. — Aldfrid, long an exile at Iona, becomes King of Northumbria. — Wilfrid is recalled and re-established in his diocese. — Storms raised by him at Lindisfarne, which he abandons to another bishop. — Death of Archbishop Theodore, ... Page 378

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THE LAST YEARS OF WILFRID. — 705–709.

Wilfrid's illness assembles all the abbots of his monasteries about him. — He divides his treasures: his farewell to the monks of Ripon. — His last journey to Mercia. — He consecrates the Church of Evesham monastery. — Bishop Egwin of Worcester and the smiths. — Vision of the three virgins in the forest. — Simon de Montfort, creator of the House of Commons, buried at Evesham. — Wilfrid narrates all his life to his successor Tatbert. — His death. — His funeral at Ripon. — His worship and his miracles. — He appears with St. Cuthbert to relieve Hexham against the Scots: the Christian Dioscuri. — His banner appears at the battle of the Standard. — Services which he rendered to the monastic order, to the Church of England, to the universal Church, to the English nation. (Note on the Culdees of York.) — He begins that long succession of pontiff-confessors which has no rival out of the Church of England. — His character, . Page 434

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ST. CUTHBERT. — 637–687.

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Durham. — Magnificence and wealth of that cathedral, after Toledo the richest in the world. — Right of asylum. — Efficacy of his protection to the oppressed. — Alfred, Canute, and William the Conqueror. — The independence, almost sovereign, of Cuthbert's successors under the Anglo-Norman monarchy. — He is invoked by the English against the Scottish invasions. — Battle of Neville's Cross. — His banner appears for the last time in the insurrection of the North against Henry VIII. — It is profaned and burned with his body. — His popularity at sea. — The sailor-monks. — Cuthbert, while a child, saw them like sea-birds on the waves. — His appearance to sailors in danger. — The hermit Ethelwold prays for the shipwrecked. — Grace Darling, the Christian heroine of these islands in the nineteenth century, ... Page 455

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The king of the Picts requests Ceolfrid to send him architects, and arguments in favor of Roman unity. — Answer of Ceolfrid, in which he quotes from Plato. — The Picts abandon the Celtic peculiarities. — The monks of Iona leave their monasteries rather than adopt the Roman ritual. — Their abbot, Adamnan, biographer of Columba, and the last great personage of the Celtic Church. — His relations with King Aldfrid and the

Abbot Ceolfrid. — He attempts in vain to lead the monks of Iona back to Roman rule, but has more success in Ireland, where he dies. — Iona is brought back to Catholic unity by the Anglo-Saxon Egbert, the head of a colony of Saxon monks in Ireland. — His austere and holy life. — He loses his most intimate friend, who reproaches him for desiring to survive him. — He uses his influence with the Anglo-Saxons to send them as missionaries to Germany. — After thirteen years' struggle, he overcomes the resistance of Iona, and dies on the very day when the feast of Easter is celebrated by both parties together. — Ireland and Caledonia having been thus brought back to Catholic unity, only the Britons of Cambria and Cornwall remain outside its pale, by reason of their national antipathy for the Saxon conquerors. — Note upon Bede's injustice to them. — Attempt of St. Aldhelm to bring them in. — His royal birth, and education — half Celtic, half Roman — at Malmesbury and Canterbury. — He becomes Abbot of Malmesbury. — His literary fame greater than his merit; his vernacular songs; intellectual development of Anglo-Saxon cloisters. — Extent and variety of his studies. — His continual solicitude for souls. — His great monastic character. — His zeal for preaching. — He interferes in favor of Wilfrid. — He goes to Rome to obtain the privilege of exemption for Malmesbury, the monks of which persist in retaining him as abbot, even after his promotion to the episcopate. — Anecdote about the importation of Bibles. — Death of Aldhelm. — His exertions for bringing back Celtic dissenters. — His letter to the King of Cornwall. — The Britons of Cambria, who had resisted all the efforts of Roman and Saxon missionaries, adopt the Roman ritual by the influence of one of their own bishops. — Their pilgrimages to Rome. — End of the struggle. — Opinion of Mabillon. — Resistance proportioned to the dangers which beset the special nationality. — Union the work of Benedictines. — In the Britannic Isles, as among the Gauls, Celtic monasticism conquered and eclipsed by the Benedictine order, ... Page 514

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The star of Northumbria pales, notwithstanding the erection of the see of York into an archbishopric. — Sad end of the lineage of Oswy. — King Ceolfrid, to whom Bede dedicates his History, becomes a monk at Lindisfarne. — His successor Eadbert follows his example. — Other monk-kings. — Almost each dynasty of the Heptarchy furnishes its share; in East Anglia, Sigebert, who dies on the field of battle; in Essex, Sebbi, who leads back his people to the faith — his desire to die in solitude; and Offa, who dies at Rome; in Mercia, which inherited the preponderating power of Northumbria, Ceonred, the travelling companion and fellow-novice of Offa; Ethelred, founder, monk, and abbot of Bardeney. — Another Mercian king, Ceolred, dies in a debauch. — Ethelbald, pursued by Ceolred, takes refuge in the marsh of Croyland with the hermit Guthlac, who predicts to him that he will be King of Mercia. — What Guthlac had been before he became an anchorite. — His solitary life resembles those of some of the most illustrious saints in the monastic order. — Death of Guthlac. — Foundation of the celebrated Abbey of Croyland upon the site of his cell. — Continuation and end of the reign of Ethelbald. — Remonstrances of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany. — The supremacy passes from Mercia to Wessex. — Three West Saxon kings abdicate to become monks or pilgrims to Rome: Centwin; Ceadwalla, the friend of Wilfrid, who lives just long enough to be baptized by the Pope; and Ina the friend of St. Aldhelm. — Reign of Ina, the legislator, victor, and pacificator of the Britons; restorer of the Celtic sanctuary of Glastonbury, the first protector of St. Boniface. — In consequence of a surprise prepared for him by his wife, he goes to Rome as a penitent to die, and founds the *Schola Saxonum* there. — Crowd of Anglo-Saxon pilgrims of both sexes to Rome. — Abuses and disorders. — False monks and false pilgrims. — The age of gold a chimera in the Church as elsewhere, ... Page 575

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education by monasteries and monastic bishops. — St. John of Beverley. — Fondness of the Anglo-Saxon students for horsemanship. — Services rendered to agriculture. — Position of the monks as landlords. — Close alliance between the monastic order and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. — Intervention in political matters. — Their place in the national councils. — Authority, composition, and powers of these councils. — The distinction between the temporal and spiritual is not forgotten. — Influence of monks in these assemblies, and through them on laws and manners. — They contribute to the formation of that national unity which, since the ninth century, has never been disturbed. — Their devotion to the cause of the poor: expiation for the sins of the rich gives rise to public almsgiving. — Their zeal for the liberation of slaves; contest between an archbishop and an abbot for a young captive. — The rights of man as well as those of God vindicated by the monks throughout the history of their conquest of England. — Religion is too often left defenceless, but her ministers respect honor and the freedom of thought in regard to the things of God. — The monastic missionaries perfect the national character without changing it; the spirit of the Saxons still lives in modern England; modern liberty, self-government, and parliamentary rule are rooted in the Saxon times. — Conformity of monastic rules with the tone of Anglo-Saxon institutions. — Splendor and prodigality of the aristocracy. — Motives of their gifts. — Abuse of their grants of land. — *Folc-land and boc-land.* — Monastic possessions exempt from military service and from taxes. — Public danger remarked by Bede. — Repression of many abuses by the Council of Cloveshove; it decrees against monastic luxury and wealth, and against the false ideas prevalent as to almsgiving. — The monastic riches arising from the munificence of kings and nobles soon excite envy; fluctuations and oppressions noticed by St. Boniface; necessity of a limit which might be imposed by the Church herself on the increase of monastic possessions. — Their value forms a pretext for spoliation and heresy. — Lacordaire and Mabillon. — A Spanish Benedictine martyred in 1608. — Before reaching this point England becomes the home of Christian propagandism and the instructress of the Teutonic races. — At the death of Bede, Boniface is already the apostle of Germany, ... Page 599

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the Anglo-Saxons. — Influence and authority of abbesses. They appear in the national councils. — Ceremonial of the solemn benediction of a nun.

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Each dynasty of the Heptarchy supplies its share of virgins, wives, and widows.

The Northumbrian nuns already well known, except Bega. — Legend of this princess, an Irishwoman by birth. — Perpetual confusion of history and tradition.

The *Ascings*, or princesses of the Kentish dynasty. — Ethelburga, Queen of Northumbria, afterwards foundress of Lyminge. — Her sister Eadburga, and her niece Earnswida, foundress of Folkestone. — The legend of Domneva and her brothers. — The hind's run in the Isle of Thanet. — Great popularity of St. Mildred. — Legend of the box on the ear. — Mildred's sisters. — Milburga and the dead child.

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The *Uffings* of East Anglia. — The three daughters of King Anna who fell in battle. — Withburga and her community fed on hind's milk. — Three generations of saints of the race of Odin at Ely, which had for its three first abbesses a Queen of Northumbria, a Queen of Kent, and a Queen of Mercia. — Wereburga, the fourth sainted Abbess of Ely, and the shepherd of Weedon.

Nuns of the race of Cerdic in Wessex; the wife and sisters of King Ina. — St. Cuthburga, foundress of Winbourne. — The monastery of Frideswida, a West Saxon princess, is the cradle of the University of Oxford: the kiss of the leper.

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Literary, biblical, and classical studies among the Anglo-Saxon nuns — chiefly at Barking, under Abbess Hildelida. — St. Aldhelm addresses to them his *Eulogy of Virginity*; his letters to other nuns. — Winbourne, another centre of intellectual activity. — Abbess Tetta and her five hundred nuns; the novices dance on the tomb of their mistress.

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Winbourne, a double monastery. — Origin of these singular institutions. — They flourished chiefly in the Irish colonies in Gaul; from thence introduced into England. — A monastery of men joined to every great abbey of women, and always governed by the abbess. — Interdicted by Archbishop Theodore. — The double monasteries disappeared after the Danish invasion; resemblance to the boys' schools managed by young girls in the United States. — In the seventh and eighth centuries no disorders are remarked in them except at Coldingham. — What were the abuses of the Anglo Saxon cloisters. — Splendor of dress; attempts upon the modesty of the nuns foreseen and punished by Anglo-Saxon legislation. — Decrees of Archbishop Theodore and Egbert against the criminal relations of the clergy with nuns; their importance should not be exaggerated.

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Excesses of feeling vanish before death, but death itself does not put an end to the sweet friendships of the cloister. — St. Galla. — Hilda and her friend; Ethelburga and her friend; the daughters of Earl Puch. — Visions of light. — The daughter of the King of Kent and the lay sister at Faremoutier. — The shining shroud at Barking; the extinguished lamp.

VII.

History has preserved only these names, but many others have disappeared after glorifying the Church and their country. — Masculine character of these Anglo-Saxon nuns: their monastic ideal unites the types of man, woman, and child.

Conclusion. — The whole ancient Catholic world has perished except the army of sacrifice. — Number and endurance of contemporary vocations, ... Page 645

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BOOK IX.

ST. COLUMBA, THE APOSTLE OF CALEDONIA, 521–597.

"I send thee unto the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified."— ACTS xxvi. 18.

CHAPTER I.

THE YOUTH OF COLUMBA AND HIS MONASTIC LIFE IN IRELAND.

The biographers of Columba. — His different names. — His royal origin. — The supreme kings of Ireland: the O'Neills and O'Donnells; Red Hugh. — Birth of Columba; vision of his mother. — His monastic education; jealousy of his comrades; Kieran; the two Finnians; the school of Clonard. — Vision of the guardian angel and the three brides. — The assassin of a virgin struck by death at the prayer of Columba. — His youthful influence in Ireland; his monastic foundations, especially at Durrow and at Derry; his song in honor of Derry. — His love for poetry; his connection with the travelling bards. — He was himself a poet, a great traveller, and of a quarrelsome disposition. — His passion for manuscripts. — Longarad of the hairy legs and his bag of books. — Dispute about the Psalter of Finnian; judgment of King Diarmid, founder of Clonmacnoise. — Protest of Columba; he takes to flight, chanting the *Hymn of Confidence*, and raises a civil war. — Battle of Cul-Dreimhne; the *Cathac* or Psalter of battle. — Synod of Teltown; Columba is excommunicated. — St. Brendan takes part with Columba, who consults several hermits, and among others Abban, in the Cell of Tears. — The last of his advisers, Molaise, condemns him to exile. — Twelve of his disciples follow him; devotion of the young Mochonna. — Contradictory reports concerning the first forty years of his life.

The biographers of Columba.

ST. COLUMBA, the apostle and monastic hero of Caledonia, has had the good fortune to have his history written by another monk, almost a contempo-

rary of his own, whose biography of him is as delightful as it is edifying. This biographer, Adamnan, was the ninth successor of Columba as abbot of his principal establishment at Iona, and in addition was related to him. Born only a quarter of a century later, he had seen in his childhood the actual companions of Columba and those who had received his last breath.[1] He wrote at the very fountain-head, on the spot where his glorious predecessor had dictated his last words, surrounded by scenes and recollections which still bore the trace of his presence, or were connected with the incidents of his life. A still earlier narrative, written by another abbot of Iona,[2] and reproduced almost word for word by Adamnan, forms the basis of his work, which he has completed by a multitude of anecdotes and testimonies collected with scrupulous care, and which altogether, though unfortunately without chronological order, forms one of the most living, attractive, and authentic relics of Christian history.[3]

His different names.

Like twenty other saints of the Irish calendar, Columba bore a symbolical name borrowed from the Latin, a name which signified the dove of the Holy Ghost, and which was soon to be rendered illustrious by his countryman Columbanus, the celebrated founder of Luxeuil, with whom many modern historians have confounded him.[4] To distinguish the one from the other, and to indicate specially the greatest Celtic missionary of the British Isles, we shall adopt, from the different versions of his name, that of Co-

[1] "Ut ab aliquibus, qui præsentes inerant, didicimus." — ADAMNAN, lib. iii. c. 23.

[2] By Comyn the Fair (*Cummeneus Albus*), the seventh bishop of Iona, 657 to 669. This narrative was first published by Colgan in the *Trias Thaumaturga*, afterwards in the first volume of the *Acta Sanctorum ordinis S. Benedicti*, and finally by the Bollandists, vol. ii. June.

[3] Adamnan, who was born in 624, must have written the biography of St. Columba between 690 and 703, a period at which he gave up the liturgical traditions of the Scots and the direction of the Monastery of Iona to settle near the Anglo-Saxon king of Northumbria, Aldfrid (VARIN. *Premier Mémoire*, p. 172). Adamnan's work was first published by Canisius in his *Thesaurus Antiquitatum* in 1604; afterwards with four other biographies of the same saint by the Franciscan Colgan, in his *Trias Thaumaturga* (Louvain, 1647); by the Bollandists in 1698; and finally by Pinkerton, a Scotch antiquary of the last century. It has just been reprinted, after a MS. of the eighth century, by the Rev. Dr. W. Reeves, for the Celtic Archæological Society of Dublin, with maps, glossary, and appendix; Dublin, 1857. This excellent publication, which is distinguished by an impartiality too rare among learned English authors, has rendered a considerable service both to the hagiography and to the national history of Ireland and Scotland.

[4] Among others, Camden, in the sixteenth century; Fleury at certain points (book xxxix. c. 36); and Augustin Thierry, in the first editions of his *Histoire de la Conquête d'Angleterre*.

lumba. His countrymen have almost always named him *Columb Kill* or *Cille*, that is to say, the *dove of the cell*, thus adding to his primitive name a special designation, intended to recall either the essentially monastic character of the saint, or the great number of communities founded and governed by him.[5] He was a scion of one of those great Irish races, of whom it is literally true to say that they lose themselves in the night of ages, but which have retained to our own day, thanks to the tenacious attachment of the Irish people to their national recollections, through all the vicissitudes of conquest, persecution, and exile, a rank more patriotic and popular than that of mere nobility or aristocratic lineage. This was the great race of the Nialls or O'Donnells[6] (*clan Domhnaill*), which, native to and master of all the north-western part of the island (the modern counties of Tyrconnell, Tyrone, and Donegal), held sovereign sway in Hibernia and Caledonia, over the two shores of the Scottish sea, during the sixth century. Almost without interruption, up to 1168, kings, springing from its different branches, exercised in Ireland the supreme monarchy — that is to say, a sort of primacy over the provincial kings, which has been compared to that of metropolitan over bishops, but which rather recalls the feudal sovereignty of the Salic emperors, or of the kings of the family of Capet over the great vassals of Germany and France, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Nothing could be more unsettled or stormy than the exercise of this sovereignty. It was incessantly disputed by some vassal king, who generally succeeded by force of arms in robbing the supreme monarch of his crown and his life, and replacing

His royal origin.

The monarchs or supreme kings of Ireland.

[5] "Qui videlicet Columba nunc a nonnullis, composito a cella et columba nomine, Columcelli vocatur." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 9. "Eo quod multarum cellarum, id est, monasteriorum vel ecclesiarum institutor, fundator et rector fuit." — Notker Balbulus, *Martyrol.*, 9 Jun.

[6] There is a history of the saint in Irish by Magnus O'Donnell, who describes himself as prince of Tyrconnell. It was put together in 1532, and the original MS. is to be found in the Bodleian. It is a legendary compilation, founded upon the narrative of Adamnan, but augmented by a crowd of fabulous legends, though at the same time by important Irish traditions and historical details in honor of the race of O'Donnell, which was that of the saint and of the historian. It has been abridged, translated into Latin, and published by Colgan in the *Triades Thaumaturgæ*. This volume is the second of the author's collected works, entitled *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ, seu sacræ ejusdem insulæ antiquitates*, which he was not able to finish, and which unfortunately includes only the saints of the first three months of the year. I have found a copy of this very rare collection in only one of all the Paris libraries, that of St. Geneviève.

him upon the throne of Tara, with a tolerable certainty of being himself similarly treated by the son of the dethroned prince.[7] Besides, the right of succession in Ireland was not regulated by the law of primogeniture. According to the custom known under the name of *Tanistry*, the eldest blood-relation succeeded every deceased prince or chief, and the brother in consequence preceded the son in the order of succession.

The O'Neills and O'Donnells.

After the English conquest, the warlike and powerful race of Nialls was able to maintain, by dint of dauntless perseverance, a sort of independent sovereignty in the north-west of Ireland. The names of the O'Neills and O'Donnells, chiefs of its two principal branches, and too often at war with each other, are to be found on every page of the annals of unhappy Ireland. After the Reformation, when religious persecution had come in to aggravate all the evils of the conquest, these two houses supplied their indignant and unsubdued country with a succession of heroic soldiers who struggled to the death against the perfidious and sanguinary despotism of the Tudors and Stuarts. Ten centuries passed in such desperate struggles have not weakened the traditions which link the saint whose history we are about to tell to those champions of an ancient faith and an outraged country. Even under the reign of Elizabeth, the vassals of young Hugh O'Donnell, called Red Hugh,[8] so renowned in poetical records and popular traditions of Erin, and the most dangerous antagonist of English tyranny, recognized in him the hero indicated in the prophetic songs of Columb-kill, and thus placed his glory and that of his ancestors under the wing of the *dove of the cells*, as under a patronage at once domestic and celestial.[9]

[7] Let us recall in this connection the very ancient division of Ireland into four provinces or kingdoms: — to the north, Ulster, or Ultonia; to the south, Munster or Mommonia; to the east, Leinster or Lagenia; to the west, Connaught or Cannocia. A distinct district, the antique Sacred Middle of Ireland, represented by the counties of Meath and Westmeath, surrounded the royal residence of Tara, celebrated in Moore's melodies, and some ruins of which still remain. This district was exclusively dependent on the supreme monarch. See the map annexed to this volume.

[8] Taken prisoner by the English in his cradle, he died at the age of twenty-nine, in 1602, at Simancas, where he had gone to seek aid from Spain. His brother, the heir of his power in Ireland, also died in exile in Rome, where his tomb may still be seen in San Pietro in Montorio.

[9] Reeves, *Adamnan*, p. 34. O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, 1861, p. 328. The eight great races of Ireland, sung by the bards and celebrated in the national history, are these: —

The kindred of Columba.

The father of Columba was descended from one of the eight sons of the great king Niall of the Nine Hostages,[10] who was supreme monarch of all Ireland from 379 to 405, at the period when Patrick was brought to the island as a slave. Consequently he sprang from a race which had reigned in Ireland for six centuries; and in virtue of the ordinary law of succession, might himself have been called to the throne.[11] His mother belonged to a reigning family in Leinster, one of the four subordinate kingdoms of the island. He was born at Gartan, in one of the wildest districts of the present county of Donegal — where the slab of stone upon which his mother lay at the moment of his birth is still shown. He who passes a night upon that stone is cured forever from the pangs of nostalgia, and will never be consumed, while absent or in exile, by a too passionate love for his country. Such at least is the belief of the poor Irish emigrants, who flock thither at the moment when they are about to abandon the confiscated and ravaged soil of their country to seek their living in America, moved by a touching recollection of the great missionary who gave up his native land for the love of God and human souls.

His birth. 7th December, 521.

Before his birth, his mother had a dream, which posterity has accepted as a graceful and poetical symbol of her son's career. An angel appeared to her, bringing her a veil covered with flowers of wonderful beauty, and the sweetest variety of colors; immediately after she saw the veil carried away by the wind, and rolling out as it fled over plains,

O'Neill and O'Donnell,	in the north.	O'Moore and O'Byrne,	in the east.
O'Brien and M'Carthy,	in the south.	O'Connor and O'Rourke,	in the west.

The principality of Tyrconnell, confiscated by James I., contained 1,105.000 acres. "I would rather," said the most illustrious of the O'Neills in 1597, "be O'Neill of Ulster than king of Spain." Nevertheless the chiefs of these two great races are generally described by the annalists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as earls of Tyrconnell, a title which had been conferred upon them by the English crown in the hope of gaining them over. The articles upon the O'Neills and O'Donnells in Sir Bernard Burke's interesting work, *Vicissitudes of Families*, should be read on this subject. The posterity of the O'Donnells still flourishes in an elevated position in Austria.

[10] Because he had received nine hostages from a king whom he had conquered.

[11] An ancient life of the saint, in Irish, quoted by Dr. Reeves, p. 269, expressly states this fact, and adds that he gave up his right to the throne only for the love of God.

woods, and mountains: then the angel said to her, "Thou art about to become the mother of a son, who shall blossom for heaven, who shall be reckoned among the prophets of God, and who shall lead numberless souls to the heavenly country."[12] This spiritual power, this privilege of leading souls to heaven, was recognized by the Irish people, converted by St. Patrick, as the greatest glory which its princes and great men could gain.

Education of Columba.

The Irish legends, which are always distinguished, even amidst the wildest vagaries of fancy, by a high and pure morality, linger lovingly upon the childhood and youth of the predestined saint. They tell us how, confided in the first place to the care of the priest who had baptized him, and who gave him the first rudiments of literary education, he was accustomed from his earliest years to the heavenly visions which were to occupy so large a place in his life. His guardian angel often appeared to him; and the child asked if all the angels in heaven was as young and shining as he. A little later Columba was invited by the same angel to choose among all the virtues those which he would like best to possess. "I choose," said the youth, "chastity and wisdom;" and immediately three young girls of wonderful beauty, but foreign air, appeared to him, and threw themselves on his neck to embrace him. The pious youth frowned, and repulsed them with indignation. "What!" they said; "then thou dost not know us?" "No, not the least in the world." "We are three sisters whom our father gives to thee to be thy brides." "Who, then, is your father?" "Our father is God, he is Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour of the world." "Ah, you have indeed an illustrious father. But what are your names?" "Our names are Virginity, Wisdom, and Prophecy; and we come to leave thee no more, to love thee with an incorruptible love."[13]

Vision of the three sisters.

[12] "Quoddam miræ pulchritudinis peplum detulit, in quo veluti universorum decorosi colores florum depicti videbantur. . . . Peplum a se elongari volando videbat, camporumque latitudinem in majus crescendo excedere, montesque et saltus majore sui mensura superare. . . . Talem filium editura es floridum, qui quasi unus prophetarum Dei inter ipsos connumerabitur, innumerabiliumque animarum dux ad cœlestem a Deo patriam est prædestinatus." — Adamn., iii. 1.

[13] "Ergo ne angeli omnes ita juvenili ætate floretis, ita splendide vestiti ornatique inceditis? . . . Age ergo, quid eligis ediscere. . . . Tres adsittere virgines admirandi decoris et peregrini vultus, quas statim in ejus amplexus et oscula improviso ruentes, pudicitiæ cultor contracta fronte . . . abigebat. Ergo ne nos non agnoscis quarum basia et amores viliter aspernas? . . .

From the house of the priest, Columba passed into the great monastic schools, which were not only a nursery for the clergy of the Irish Church, but where also young laymen of all conditions were educated. Columba, like many others, there learned to make his first steps in that monastic life to which he had been drawn by the call of God. He devoted himself not only to study and prayer, but also to the manual toil then inseparable, in Ireland and everywhere else, from a religious profession. Like all his young companions, he had to grind over night the corn for the next day's food: but when his turn came, it was so well and quickly done that his companions suspected him of having been assisted by an angel.[14] The royal birth of Columba procured him several distinctions in the schools which were not always to the satisfaction of his comrades. One of the latter, named Kieran, who was also destined to fill a great place in Scotic legend, became indignant at the ascendency of Columba: but while the two students disputed, a celestial messenger came to Kieran and placed before him an auger, a plane, and an axe, saying, "Look at these tools, and recollect that these are all thou hast sacrificed for God, since thy father was only a carpenter; but Columba has sacrificed the sceptre of Ireland, which might have come to him by right of his birth and the grandeur of his race."[15]

Jealousy of his comrades.

We learn from authentic documents that Columba completed his monastic life under the direction of two holy abbots, both bearing the name of Finnian. The first, who was also a bishop, ordained him deacon, but seems to have had him for a shorter time under his authority than the second Finnian, who, himself trained by a disciple of St. Patrick, had long lived in Cambria, near St. David. Columba's first steps in life are thus con-

The two Finnians. Monastic school of Clonard.

Prorsus quæ sitis ignoro. . . . Tres sumus sorores et sponsæ tibi nuper a patre nostro desponsatæ. . . . Equis vero est vester pater? . . . Magni estis profecto parentis filiæ; pergite, quæso, etiam nomina vestra recludere." — O'Donnell, *Vita quinta S. Columbæ*, i. 36, 37, 38, ap. Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 394.

[14] "Ordinariæ illis epulæ cibarius panis; labor vero in singulos per vices distributus, nocturna lucubratione grana emolere, ex quibus hujusmodi panis pro communi omnium victu conficeretur. Id labori cum Columbæ, quia contubernalis esset, sæpius obtigisset, prompte et humillime acceptavit." — O'Donnell, i. 42.

[15] "Delapsus e cœlo bonus genius . . . terebram, asciam et securim Kierano præsentans. Hæcce, inquit, aliaque hujusmodi, quibus tuus pater carpentariam exercebat, pro Dei amore reliquisti. Columba vero Hiberniæ sceptrum avito suo et generis potentia sperandum antequam offerretur abrenuntiavit." — O'Donnell, i. 44.

nected with the two great monastic apostles of Ireland and Cambria, the patriarchs of the two Celtic races which up to this time had shown the most entire fidelity to the Christian faith, and the greatest predilection for monastic life. The abbot Finnian who ordained Columba priest, ruled at Clonard the monastery which he had founded, and of which we have already spoken — one of those immense conventual establishments which were to be found nowhere but among the Celts, and which recalled to recollection the monastic towns of the Thebaïd. He had made of his monastery one great school, which was filled with the Irish youth, then, as always, consumed by a thirst for religious instruction; and we again find here the favorite number, so often repeated by Celtic tradition, of three thousand pupils, all eager to receive the instructions of him who was called the Master of Saints.[16]

The assassin of a young girl falls dead before him.

While Columba studied at Clonard, being still only a deacon, an incident took place which has been proved by authentic testimony, and which fixed the general attention upon him by giving a first evidence of his supernatural and prophetic intuition. An old Christian bard (the bards were not all Christians), named Gemmaïn, had come to live near the Abbot Finnian, asking from him, in exchange for his poetry, the secret of fertilizing the soil. Columba, who continued all his life a passionate admirer of the traditionary poetry of his nation, determined to join the school of the bard, and to share his labors and studies. The two were reading together out of doors, at a little distance from each other, when a young girl appeared in the distance pursued by a robber. At the sight of the old man the young fugitive made for him with all her remaining strength, hoping, no doubt, to find safety in the authority exercised throughout Ireland by the national poets. Gemmaïn, in great trouble, called his pupil to his aid to defend the unfortunate child, who was trying to hide herself under their long robes, when her pursuer reached the spot. Without taking any notice of her defenders, he struck

[16] Varin, *Deuxième Mémoire*, p. 47. "Magister sanctorum Hiberniæ, habuit in sua schola de Cluain-Evaird tria millia sanctorum." — *Martyrol. Dungal.* ap. Moore, *History of Ireland*, vol. i. ch. 13. The holy abbot Finnian died in 549. The other Finnian, the first master of Columb-Kill, is also known under the name of Finnbar, and was abbot at Maghbile (Down), and died in 579. It is believed that he was St. Fredianus (Frediano), bishop and patron of Lucca, where there is a fine and curious church under his invocation. Colgan has published the lives of both, 28th February and 18th March, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*. The two saints are frequently confounded. — Compare Adamnan, i. 1; ii. 1; iii. 4.

her in the neck with his lance, and was making off, leaving her dead at their feet. The horrified old man turned to Columba. "How long," he said, "will God leave unpunished this crime which dishonors us?" "For this moment only," said Columba, "not longer; at this very hour, when the soul of this innocent creature ascends to heaven, the soul of the murderer shall go down to hell." At the instant, like Ananias at the words of Peter, the assassin fell dead. The news of this sudden punishment, the story goes, went over all Ireland, and spread the fame of the young Columba far and wide.[17]

His foundations in Ireland.

It is easy to perceive, by the importance of the monastic establishments which he had brought into being even before he had attained the age of manhood, that his influence must have been as precocious as it was considerable. Apart from the virtues of which his after life afforded so many examples, it may be supposed that his royal birth gave him an irresistible ascendency in a country where, since the introduction of Christianity, all the early saints, like the principal abbots, belonged to reigning families, and where the influence of blood and the worship of genealogy continue, even to this day, to a degree unknown in other lands. Springing, as has been said, from the same race as the monarch of all Ireland, and consequently himself eligible for the same high office, which was more frequently obtained by election or usurpation than inheritance — nephew or near cousin of the seven monarchs who successively wielded the supreme authority during his life — he was also related by ties of blood to almost all the provincial kings.[18] Thus we see him, during his whole career, treated on a footing of perfect intimacy and equality by all the princes of Ireland and of Caledonia, and exercising a sort of spiritual sway equal or superior to the authority of secular sovereigns.

Before he had reached the age of twenty-five he had presided over the creation of a crowd of monasteries. As many

[17] "Carminator . . . habens secum carmen magnificum." — *Vita S. Finniani*, ap. Colgan, *Acta SS.*, p. 395. "Senex perturbatus tali subitatione Columbam eminus legentem advocavit, ut ambo in quantum valuissent filiam a persequente defenderent. . . . Filiam sub vestimentis eorum jugulavit, et, relinquens jacentem mortuam super pedes eorum, abire cœpit. . . . Quanto, sancte puer Columba, hoc scelus temporis spatio inultum fieri judex justus patietur. . . . Eadem hora qua interfectæ ab eo filiæ anima ascendet ad cœlos, anima ipsius interfectoris descendet ad inferos." — Adamnan, ii. 25.

[18] See the genealogical tables, Dr. Reeve's Appendix.

as thirty-seven in Ireland alone recognized him as their founder. The most ancient and important of these foundations were situated, as was formerly that of St. Bridget at Kildare,[19] in vast oak-forests, from which they took their name. The first, Durrow (*Dair-mach, Roboreti campus*), where a cross and well bearing the name of Columba are still to be seen, was erected in the central region called the *umbilical*, or sacred middle of Ireland. The other, Derry (*Doire-chalgaich, Roboretum Calgachi*), is situated in the northern part of the island, in Columba's native province, in the hollow of a bay of that sea which separates Ireland from Scotland. After having long been the seat of a great and rich Catholic bishopric, it became, under its modern name of Londonderry, one of the principal centres of English colonization, and was, in 1689, the bulwark of the Protestant conquest against the powerless efforts of the last of the Stuart kings.[20] But nothing then indicated the possibility of those lamentable changes, nor of the miserable triumphs of inhuman force and wicked persecution.

The young Columba was specially attached to Derry, where he habitually lived. He superintended with care not only the discipline and studies of his community, but external matters, even so far as to watch over the preservation of

[19] See *ante*, p. 546.

[20] Dr. Reeves gives in his appendix G a detailed enumeration of the thirty-seven foundations of Columb-Kill in Ireland. In the north of the island, and in his native province, we remark the name of Raphoe, until lately the seat of a diocese, and Tory, in an isle of the coast of Donegal; in the central district Sord, now *Swords*, seven miles from Dublin, which has retained, like Tory, its *round tower;* and Kells, which gained celebrity only in 807 as the refuge of the monks driven from Iona by the threats of the Norsemen. This monastery was completed in 814, and from that day became the headquarters of the Columbian monks. Here is still to be seen one of the finest round towers of Ireland (seventy feet high); an oratory called *St. Columb-Kill's house;* a cemetery-cross with this inscription on the plinth — *Crux Patricii et Columbæ.* Two celebrated Gospels of the Trinity College Bible at Dublin are called the *Book of Kells* and the *Book of Durrow.* In the important work of Dr. Petrie, called *Inquiry into the Origin and Uses of the Round Towers of Ireland*, 1845, 2d ed., p. 430, will be found an engraving of a building near the cemetery of Kells, called St. Columba's house. It is a square building, 23 feet long, 21 broad, and 38 feet high, but not vaulted. The walls are 4 feet in thickness; the roof is of stone, with two gables. It has little circular windows at a height of 15 feet. It was formerly divided into three chambers and two stories. In one of these chambers is to be seen a great flat stone 6 feet long, which is called the bed of Columba. The roof of this building is entirely covered with ivy. In the isle of Tory a round tower, belonging to the monastery constructed by Columba, still remains. Petrie (p. 389) also recognizes round towers in the buildings quoted in connection with the two miracles told by Adamnan, c. 15, in which mention is made of bells and belfries.

the neighboring forest. He would never permit an oak to be cut down. Those which fell by natural decay, or were struck down by the wind, were alone made use of for the fire which was lighted on the arrival of strangers, or distributed to the neighboring poor. The poor had a first right, in Ireland as everywhere else, to the goods of the monks; and the Monastery of Derry fed a hundred applicants every day with methodical regularity.[21]

His songs in honor of Derry.

At a more advanced age our saint gave vent to his tenderness for his monastic creations in songs, an echo of which has come down to us. The text of these songs, such as has been preserved, is probably later than Columba; but it is written in the oldest Irish dialect, and it expresses, naturally enough, the sentiments of the founder and his disciples: —

"Were all the tribute of Scotia[22] mine,
From its midland to its borders,
I would give all for one little cell
In my beautiful Derry.
For its peace and for its purity,
For the white angels that go
In crowds from one end to the other,
I love my beautiful Derry.
For its quietness and its purity,
For heaven's angels that come and go
Under every leaf of the oaks,
I love my beautiful Derry.

My Derry, my fair oak grove,
My dear little cell and dwelling,
Oh God in the heavens above!
Let him who profanes it be cursed.
Beloved are Durrow and Derry,
Beloved is Raphoe the pure,
Beloved the fertile Drumhome,
Beloved are Sords and Kells!
But sweeter and fairer to me
The salt sea where the sea-gulls cry
When I come to Derry from far,

[21] O'Donnell, ap. Colgan, p. 397, 398.

[22] Let us repeat here that the names of *Scotia*, *Scotti*, when they occur in works of the seventh to the twelfth century, are almost exclusively applied to Ireland and the Irish, and were extended later to Scotland proper, the north and west of which were peopled by a colony of Irish Scots, only at a later period. From thence comes the name of *Erse*, *Eryseht*, or *Irish*, retained up to our own day, by the Irish dialect, otherwise called Gaelic. In Adamnan, as in Bede, Scotia means Ireland, and modern Scotland is comprehended in the general title of Britannia. At a later period the name of Scotia disappeared in Ireland, and became identified with the country conquered and colonized by the *Scots* in Scotland, like that of *Anglia* in Britain, and *Francia* in Gaul.

It is sweeter and dearer to me —
Sweeter to me."[23]

Nor was it only his own foundations which he thus celebrated: another poem has been preserved which is attributed to him, and which is dedicated to the glory of the monastic isle of Arran, situated upon the western coast of Ireland, where he had gone to venerate the inhabitants and the sanctuaries.[24]

"O Arran, my sun; my heart is in the west with thee. To sleep on thy pure soil is as good as to be buried in the land of St. Peter and St. Paul. To live within the sound of thy bells is to live in joy. O Arran, my sun, my love is in the west with thee."[25]

These poetic effusions reveal Columba to us under one of his most attractive aspects, as one of the minstrels of the national poetry of Ireland, the intimate union of which with the Catholic faith,[26] and its unconquerable empire over the souls of that generous people, can scarcely be exaggerated. Columba was not only himself a poet, but lived always in great and affectionate sympathy with the bards who, at that time, occupied so high a place in the social and political institutions of Ireland, and who were to be met with everywhere, in the palaces and monasteries, as on the public roads. What he did for this powerful corporation, and how, after having been their brother and friend, he became their protector and saviour, will be seen further on. Let us merely state at present that, himself a great traveller, he received the travelling bards in the different communities where he lived; among others, in that which he had built upon an islet[27] of the lake which the Boyle traverses before it throws itself into the Shannon. He confided to them the care of arranging the monastic and

His taste for poetry.

And his connection with the bards.

[23] See REEVES, pp. 288, 289. The origin and continuation of this poem will be seen further on.

[24] "Invisit aliquando S. Endeum aliosque sanctos, qui plurimi in Ara insula angelicam vitam ducebant . . . in ea insula quam sanctorum vestigiis tritam et monumentis inclytam magno affectu venerabatur." — O'DONNELL, book i. c. 105, 106. Compare COLGAN, *Act. SS. Hiberniæ*, vol. i. p. 704–714. There were still thirteen churches on this island in 1645, with the tombs of St. Enda and of a hundred and twenty other saints.

[25] Quoted in the *Transactions of the Gaelic Society*, p. 183.

[26] See *ante*, p. 545.

[27] The ruins of a church attributed to Columba are still to be seen there. Two miles from this island, on the banks of a cascade formed by the Boyle, as it throws itself into the lake (Loch Key), rises another monastery founded by him, and which became, in 1161, a Cistercian abbey of some celebrity — the Abbey of Boyle.

provincial annals, which were to be afterwards deposited in the charter-chest of the community; but above all, he made them sing for his own pleasure and that of his monks; and the latter reproached him energetically if he permitted one of those wandering poets to depart without having asked to hear some of his chants, accompanied by his harp.[28]

The monk Columba was, then, a poet. After Ossian and his glorious compeer of the Vosges, he opens the series of two hundred Irish poets, whose memories and names, in default of their works, have remained dear to Ireland. He wrote his verses not only in Latin, but also and more frequently in Irish. Only three of his Latin poems survive; but two centuries ago eleven of his Irish poems were still in existence,[29] which have not all perished, and the most authentic of which is dedicated to the glory of St. Bridget, the virgin slave, patroness of Ireland and foundress of female religious life in the Isle of Saints. She was still living when Columba was born.[30] Through the obscure and halting efforts of this infantine poetry, some tones of sincere and original feeling may yet be disentangled: —

"Bridget, the good and the virgin
Bridget, our torch and our sun,
Bridget, radiant and unseen,
May she lead us to the eternal kingdom!
May Bridget defend us
Against all the troops of hell,
And all the adversities of life;
May she beat them down before us.
All the ill movements of the flesh,
This pure virgin whom we love,
Worthy of honor without end,
May she extinguish in us.
Yes, she shall always be our safeguard,
Dear saint of Lagenia;
After Patrick she comes first,
The pillar of the land,

[28] "Quidam Scoticus poeta. . . . Cur a nobis regredienti Cronano poetæ aliquod ex more suæ artis canticum non postulasti laudabiliter decantari?" — Adamnan, book i. c. 42.

[29] "Diversa poemata S. Columbæ patrio idiomate scripta exstant penes me." — Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 472. He gives the title and quotes the first verse of each Irish poem. Dr. Reeves has given in his Appendix F the Irish text and English translation of two of these pieces, the MS. of which has passed from the hands of the Franciscans of Louvain, where the pious and patriotic Colgan wrote, to the library of Bourgogne at Brussels. They are also to be found in the Bodleian at Oxford, in a MS. which contains thirty-six Irish poems attributed to Columba.

[30] He was born in 519, and she died in 523, according to the chronology of Colgan.

Glorious among all glories,
Queen among all queens.
When old age comes upon us,
May she be to us as the shirt of hair,
May she fill us with her grace,
May Bridget protect us." [31]

It seems thus apparent that Columba was as much a bard as a monk during the first part of his life; he had the vagabond inclination, the ardent, agitated, even quarrelsome character of the race. Like most Irish saints and even monks whom history has kept in mind, he had a passionate love for travelling; [32] and to that passion he added another which brought him more than one misadventure. Books, which were less rare in Ireland than everywhere else, were nevertheless much sought after, and guarded with jealous care in the monastic libraries, which were their sole depositories. Not only an excessive value was put upon them, but they were even supposed to possess the emotions and almost the passions of living beings. Columba had a passion for fine manuscripts, and one of his biographers attributes to him the laborious feat of having transcribed with his own hand three hundred copies of the Gospel or of the Psalter.[33] He went everywhere in search of volumes, which he could borrow or copy, often experiencing refusals which he resented bitterly. There was then in Ossory, in the south-west, a holy recluse, very learned, doctor in laws and in philosophy, named Longarad *with the white legs*, because in walking barefoot his legs, which were covered with white hair, were visible. Columba having gone to visit him asked leave to examine his books. The old man gave a direct refusal; then Columba burst forth in denunciations — "May thy books no longer do thee any

His passion for MSS.

Longarad with the hairy legs.

[31] "Nos defendamur omni tempore
Per meam sanctam de Lagenia
Suppar columna regni,
Post Patricium primarium:
Quæ decor decorum
Quæ regina regia. . . .
Erit post senium
Nostrum corpus in cilicio:
Ejus gratia respergamur.
Nos protegat Brigieta."
Trias Thaumat., p. 606.

[32] "Omnes regni provincias continuo peragrans, urbes, oppida, paga circumiens." — O'Donnell, p. 398.

[33] O'Donnell, ap. Colgan, p. 438. The same number has been seen above attributed to Dega. Irish narratives know scarcely any numerals but those of three hundred and three thousand.

good, neither to thee nor to those who come after thee, since thou takest occasion by them to show thy inhospitality." This curse was heard, according to the legend. As soon as old Longarad died his books became unintelligible. They still exist, says an author of the ninth century, but no man can read them. The legend adds that in all the schools of Ireland, and even in Columba's own cell, the leathern satchels in which the monks and students carried their books, unhooked themselves from the wall and fell to the ground on the day of the old philosopher's death.[34]

Contest about the Psalter, which Columba would have copied against his master's will.

A similar narrative, more authentic but not less singular, serves as an introduction to the decisive event which changed the destiny of Columba, and transformed him from a wandering poet and ardent bookworm into a missionary and apostle. While visiting his ancient master, Finnian, our saint found means to make a clandestine and hurried copy of the abbot's Psalter, by shutting himself up at night in the church where the Psalter was deposited, lighting his nocturnal work, as happened to I know not what Spanish saint, by the light which escaped from his left hand while he wrote with the right. The abbot Finnian discovered what was going on by means of a curious wanderer, who, attracted by that singular light, looked in through the keyhole, and while his face was pressed against the door had his eye suddenly torn out by a crane, one of those familiar birds who were permitted by the Irish monks to seek a home in their churches.[35] Indignant at what he thought a theft, Finnian claimed the copy when it was finished, on the ground that a copy made without permission ought to belong to the master of the original, seeing that the transcription is the son of the original book. Columba refused to give up his work, and the question was referred to the king in his palace at Tara.

King Diarmid, founder of Clonmacnoise. 538 or 548.

King Diarmid, or Dermott, supreme monarch of Ireland, was, like Columba, descended from the great king Niall, but by another son than he whose great-grandson Columba was. He lived, like all the princes of his country, in a close union with the Church, which was represented in Ireland, more completely than anywhere else, by the monastic order. Exiled and persecuted in his

[34] *Festilogium* of Angus the Culdee, quoted by O'Curry.

[35] "Admoto ad januæ fissuram oculo, mirari cæpit. . . . Grus quædam cicurata, quæ in ecclesia erat, incauti hominis oculum impecto rostro effodit." — O'Donnell, book ii. c. 1.

youth, he had found refuge in an island, situated in one of those lakes which interrupt the course of the Shannon, the chief river of Ireland, and had there formed a friendship with a holy monk called Kieran, who was no other than the son of the carpenter, the jealous comrade of Columba at the monastic school of Clonard, but since that time his generous rival in knowledge and in austerity. Upon the still solitary bank of the river the two friends had planned the foundation of a monastery, which, owing to the marshy nature of the soil, had to be built upon piles. "Plant with me the first stake," the monk said to the exiled prince, "putting your hand under mine; and soon that hand shall be over all the men of Erin;" and it happened that Diarmid was very shortly after called to the throne. He immediately used his new power to endow richly the monastery which was rendered doubly dear to him by the recollection of his exile and of his friend. This sanctuary became, under the name of Clonmacnoise, one of the greatest monasteries and most frequented schools of Ireland, and even of Western Europe. It was so rich in possessions and even in dependent communities, daughters or vassals of its hierarchical authority, that, according to a popular saying, half of Ireland was contained within the enclosure of Clonmacnoise. This enclosure actually contained nine churches, with two round towers; the kings and lords of the two banks of the Shannon had their burying-place there for a thousand years, upon a green height which overlooks the marshy banks of the river. The sadly picturesque ruins may still be seen, and among them a stone cross, over which the prince and the abbot, holding between them the stake consecrated by the legend, are roughly sculptured.[36]

Judgment of King Diarmid.

This king might accordingly be regarded as a competent judge in a contest at once monastic and literary; he might even have been suspected of

[36] Clonmacnoise, which is situated on the eastern bank of the Shannon, seven miles below Athlone, and was afterwards made a bishop's see, must not be confounded with Cloyne, though the Latin designation, *Clonensis* or *Cluanensis*, is the same. This great abbey is chiefly remarkable on account of its abbot Tighernach (1088), a much quoted historian, whose annals have been published in the second volume of *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores* by O'Connor. Within its vast enclosure was a community of those lay monks called *Culdees*, of whom we shall have occasion to speak further on, who had been created by a lay brother of the monastery called *Conn of the poor*, by reason of his great charity. Later in the twelfth century it passed into the hands of the regular canons of St. Augustin, who retained it up to the general spoliation. — O'Curry, p. 60. *The Gentleman's Magazine* of February, 1864, publishes a plan of the actual condition of Clonmacnoise, with a very interesting notice of the architecture of the ruins by Mr. Parker.

partiality for Columba, his kinsman — and yet he pronounced against him. His judgment was given in a rustic phrase which has passed into a proverb in Ireland — *To every cow her calf*,[37] and consequently, to every book its copy. Protest of Columba protested loudly. "It is an unjust sentence," he said, "and I will revenge myself." After this incident a young prince, son of the provincial king of Connaught, who was pursued for having committed an involuntary murder, took refuge with Columba, but was seized and put to death by the king. The irritation of the poet-monk knew no bounds. The ecclesiastical immunity which he enjoyed in his quality of superior and founder of several monasteries ought to have, in his opinion, created a sort of sanctuary around his person, and this immunity had been scandalously violated by the execution of the youth whom he protected. He threatened the king with prompt vengeance. "I will denounce," he said, "to my brethren and my kindred thy wicked judgment, and the violation in my person of the immunity of the Church; they will listen to my complaint, and punish thee sword in hand.[38] Bad king, thou shalt no more see my face in thy province until God, the just Judge, has subdued thy pride. As thou hast humbled me to-day before thy lords and thy friends, God will humble thee on the battle day before thine enemies." Diarmid attempted to retain him by force in the neighborhood; but, evading the vigilance of his guards, he escaped by night from the court of Tara, and directed his steps to his native province of Tyrconnell. His first stage was Monasterboyce, where he heard from the monks that the king had planted guards on all the ordinary roads to intercept him. He then continued his course by a solitary pathway over the desert hills which lay between him and the north of Ireland; and as he went upon his lonely way, his soul found utterance in a pious song. He fled, chanting the *Song of* He flies, chanting the Song of Trust.

[37] "*Le gach boin a boinin, le gach leabhar a leabhran.*"

[38] "Scito, rex inique, quia amodo faciem meam in tua provincia non videbis donec. . . . Sicut me hodie coram senioribus tuis iniquo judicio despexisti, sic te Deus æternus in conspectu inimicorum tuorum te despiciet in die belli." — ANON. ap. USSERIUM, *De Primord. Eccles. Brit.*, cited by Colgan, p. 462. "Ego expostulabo cum fratribus et cognatis meis iniquum arbitrium tuum, et contemptam in me temeratamque Ecclesiæ immunitatem . . . et si non meam, at certe Dei regni atque Ecclesiæ causam ducto in te exercitu vindicabunt." — O'DONNELL, book ii. c. 7. This is assuredly a much modernized version of Columba's declaration of war; but the true facts are to be found in the unanimous statements of Irish tradition. Adamnan preserves a prudent silence upon all events anterior to the saint's mission to Scotland.

Trust, which has been preserved to us, and which may be reckoned among the most authentic relics of the ancient Irish tongue. We quote from it the following verses: —

"Alone am I on the mountain,
O royal Sun; prosper my path,
And then I shall have nothing to fear.
Were I guarded by six thousand,
Though they might defend my skin,
When the hour of death is fixed,
Were I guarded by six thousand,
In no fortress could I be safe.
Even in a church the wicked are slain,
Even in an isle amidst a lake;
But God's elect are safe
Even in the front of battle.
No man can kill me before my day,
Even had we closed in combat;
And no man can save my life
When the hour of death has come.
My life!
As God pleases let it be;
Nought can be taken from it,
Nought can be added to it:
The lot which God has given
Ere a man dies must be lived out.
He who seeks more, were he a prince,
Shall not a mite obtain.
A guard!
A guard may guide him on his way;
But can they, can they guard
Against the touch of death? . . .
Forget thy poverty a while;
Let us think of the world's hospitality.
The Son of Mary will prosper thee,
And every guest shall have his share.
Many a time
What is spent returns to the bounteous hand,
And that which is kept back
Not the less has passed away.
O living God!
Alas for him who evil works!
That which he thinks not of comes to him,
That which he hopes vanishes out of his hand.
There is no *Sreod*[39] that can tell our fate,
Nor bird upon the branch,
Nor trunk of gnarled oak. . . .
Better is He in whom we trust,
The King who has made us all,
Who will not leave me to-night without refuge.
I adore not the voice of birds,
Nor chance, nor the love of a son or a wife.
My Druid is Christ, the Son of God,

[39] An unknown Druidical term, probably meaning some pagan superstition of the same description as the flight of birds and the knots in the trees, mentioned immediately after.

The Son of Mary, the great Abbot,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
My lands are with the King of kings;
My order at Kells and at Moone." [40]

"Thus sang Columba," says the preface to this *Song of Trust*, "on his lonely journey; and this song will protect him who repeats it while he travels."

He raises civil war.

Columba arrived safely in his province, and immediately set to work to excite against King Diarmid the numerous and powerful clans of his relatives and friends, who belonged to a branch of the house of Niall distinct from and hostile to that of the reigning monarch. His efforts were crowned with success. The Hy-Nialls of the North armed eagerly against the Hy-Nialls of the South, of whom Diarmid was the special chief.[41] They naturally obtained the aid of the king of Connaught, father of the young prince who had been executed. According to other narratives, the struggle was one between the Nialls of the North and the Picts established in the centre of Ireland. But in any case, it was the north and west of Ireland which took arms against the supreme king. Diarmid marched to meet them, and they met in battle at Cool-Drewny, or Cul-Dreimhne, upon the borders of Ultonia and Connacia. He was completely beaten, and obliged to take refuge at Tara. The victory was due, according to the annalist Tighernach, to the prayers and songs of Columba, who had fasted and prayed with all his might to obtain from Heaven the punishment of the royal insolence,[42] and who, besides, was present at the battle, and took upon himself before all men the responsibility of the bloodshed.

Defeat of the king while Columba prays against him.

As for the manuscript which had been the object of this

[40] Moone, in the county of Kildare, where the abbatial cross of St. Columba is preserved. The translation here printed is from the version given by Dr. Reeves, with some slight modifications. — *Translator's note.*

[41] "Contulit se ad domus Conalli, Gulbanis et Eugenii proceres carne sibi propinquos, et coram eis de malis injuriis querelam instituit." — COLGAN, *Act. SS. Hibern.*, vol. i. p. 645. Compare the genealogical table of the descendants of Niall given by Dr. Reeves, p. 251. There were ten supreme kings of the branch of Hy-Nialls of the North, or of Tyrconnell, to which Columba belonged, and seventeen of the southern branch, of which Diarmid was a member. These kings alternated for two centuries, mutually killing and dethroning each other. See the notes of Kelly, to Lynch, *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii. pp. 12, 15.

[42] "Diem ineundi prælii jejunio et oratione prævertit. Deum afflicte rogans ut regiæ insolentiæ vindicibus sine suorum damno annuat victoriam." — O'DONNELL, *loc. cit.*

strange conflict of copyright elevated into a civil war, it was afterwards venerated as a kind of national, military, and religious palladium. Under the name of *Cathach*, or *Fighter*, the Latin Psalter transcribed by Columba, enshrined in a sort of portable altar, became the national relic of the O'Donnell clan. For more than a thousand years it was carried with them to battle as a pledge of victory, on the condition of being supported upon the breast of a clerk pure from all mortal sin. It has escaped as by miracle from the ravages of which Ireland had been the victim, and exists still, to the great joy of all learned Irish patriots.[43]

The Psalter of Battle.

Synod of Teltte, 562. Columba is excommunicated.

Columba, though victor, had soon to undergo the double reaction of personal remorse and the condemnation of many pious souls.[44] The latter punishment was the first to be felt. He was accused by a synod convoked in the centre of the royal domain at Teilte,[45] of having occasioned the shedding of Christian blood, and sentence of excommunication was in his absence pronounced against him. Perhaps this accusation was not entirely confined to the war which had been raised on account of the copied Psalter. His excitable and vindictive character, and, above all, his passionate attachment to his relatives, and the violent part which he took in their domestic disputes and in their continually recurring rivalries, had engaged him in other struggles, the date of which is perhaps later than that of his first departure from Ireland, but the responsibility of which is formally imputed to him by various authorities,[46] and which also ended in bloody battles.

[43] The annals of the Four Masters report that in a battle waged in 1497 between the O'Donnells and the MacDermotts, the sacred book fell into the hands of the latter, who, however, restored it in 1499. It was preserved for thirteen hundred years in the O'Donnell family, and at present belongs to a baronet of that name, who has permitted it to be exhibited in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, where it can be seen by all. It is composed of fifty-eight leaves of parchment, bound in silver. The learned O'Curry (p. 322) has given a fac-simile of a fragment of this MS., which he does not hesitate to believe is in the handwriting of our saint, as well as that of the fine copy of the Gospels called the *Book of Kells*, of which he has also given a fac-simile. See Reeves's notes upon Adamnan, p. 250, and the pamphlet upon Marianus Scotus, p. 12.

[44] "Cum illata regi Diermitio clades paulo post ad aures sanctorum Hiberniæ pervenit, Columbam quod tantæ cladis vel auctor vel occasio fuisset, taxabant." — O'Donnell, ii. 5. "In synodo sanctorum Hiberniæ gravis querela contra S. Columbam, tanquam auctorem tam multi sanguinis effusi, instituta est." — Colgan, *Act. SS. Hibern.*, p. 645.

[45] Now Teltown, a little village near Kells, in the county of Meath.

[46] Especially by the argument in Irish of the Latin poem of Columba called *Altus prosator*, which will be mentioned further on. This argument is quoted textually by Dr. Reeves, p. 253. This author is of opinion that

Other wars of Columba. St. Brendan takes up his defence.

Columba was not a man to draw back before his accusers and judges. He presented himself before the synod which had struck without hearing him. He found a defender there in the famous Abbot Brendan, the founder of the Monastery of Birr. When Columba made his appearance, this abbot rose, went up to him, and embraced him. "How can you give the kiss of peace to an excommunicated man?" said some of the other members of the synod. "You would do as I have done," he answered, "and you never would have excommunicated him, had you seen what I see — a pillar of fire which goes before him, and the angels that accompany him. I dare not disdain a man predestined by God to be the guide of an entire people to eternal life." Thanks to the intervention of Brendan, or to some other motive not mentioned, the sentence of excommunication was withdrawn; but Columba was charged to win to Christ by his preaching as many pagan souls as the number of Christians who had fallen in the battle of Cool-Drewny.[47]

He consults several confessors.

It was then that his soul seems first to have been troubled, and that remorse planted in it the germs at once of a startling conversion and of his future apostolic mission. Sheltered as he was from all vengeance or secular penalties, he must have felt himself struck so much the more by the ecclesiastical judgment pronounced against him. Various legends reveal him to us at this crisis of his life, wandering long from solitude to solitude, and from monastery to monastery, seeking out holy monks, masters of penitence and Christian virtue, and asking them anxiously what he should do to obtain the pardon of God for the murder of so many victims.[48] One of these, Froëch, who had long been his friend, reproached him with affectionate severity for

the legendary writers have antedated all these troublesome occurrences out of consideration for the Apostle of Caledonia, in order to concentrate all his eccentricities in the earlier part of his life before his voluntary expiation. Adamnan, who follows no chronological order, keeps silence on most of the events which preceded the voluntary exile of the saint, and only mentions vaguely the synod by which he was excommunicated; but he proves that after that exile Columba several times returned to Ireland, where his influence was always very considerable. "Cum a quodam synodo pro quibusdam venialibus et tam excusabilibus causis, non recte, ut post in fine claruit, excommunicaretur Columba . . . ad eamdem contra ipsum collectam venit congregationem. . . . Hoc tamen factum est in Teilte." — Book iii. c. 3.

[47] COLGAN, *loc. cit.*, p. 645.

[48] "Petens . . . quo scilicet modo post necem multorum occisorum, benevolentiam Dei ac remissionem peccatorum obtinere mereretur." — *Vita S. Molassii*, ap. *Trias Thaumat.*, p. 461.

having been the instigator of that murderous fight. "It was not I who caused it," said Columba with animation; "it was the unjust judgment of King Diarmid — it was his violation of ecclesiastical immunity which did it all." "A monk," answered the solitary, would have done better to bear the injury with patience than to avenge it with arms in his hands." "Be it so," said Columba: "but it is hard for a man unjustly provoked to restrain his heart and to sacrifice justice."[49]

He was more humble with Abban, another famous monk of the time, founder of many religious houses, one of which was called the *Cell of Tears*, because the special grace of weeping for sin was obtained there.[50] This gentle and courageous soldier of Christ was specially distinguished by his zeal against the fighting men and disturbers of the public peace. He had been seen to throw himself between two chiefs at the moment when their lances were crossed at each other's breasts;[51] and on another occasion had gone alone and unarmed to meet one of the most formidable rievers of the island, who was still a pagan and a member of a sovereign family, had made his arms drop from his hands, and had changed first into a Christian and then into a monk the royal robber, whose great-grandson has recorded this incident.[52] When Columba went to Abban, he said, "I come to beseech thee to pray for the souls of all those who have perished in the late war, which I raised for the honor of the Church. I know they will obtain grace by thy intercession, and I conjure thee to ask what is the will of God in respect to them from the angel who talks with thee every day." The aged solitary, without reproaching Columba, resisted his entreaties for some time, by reason of his great modesty, but ended by

[49] "Non ego, sed iniquum in me Diermitii regis arbitrium, et prævaricatio ecclesiasticæ immunitatisisti prælio et malis inde secutis causam præbuit. . . . Præstaret religioso viro injuriam patienter perferre, quam pugnaciter propulsare. Ita est, infit S. Columba, sed injuste provocato haud pronum est erumpentem animi motum, præsertim cum justus esse videtur, cohibere." — O'Donnell, *Vita quinta*, ii. 8.

[50] "Et istud monasterium a multis vocatur *Cealt nà ndèr*, id est cellula lacrymarum: eo quod hominibus ibi a Deo pœnitentiales lacrymæ . . . donantur." — *Vita S. Abbani*, ap. Colgan, lib. i. p. 615.

[51] "Tam appropinquabat ad alterutrum, ut lanceæ eorum ante se mixtæ essent invicem." — *Ibid.*, p. 619.

[52] "Quidam ex regali genere istius terræ . . . heros et tyrannus, qui semper occidit et rapit et vivit in latrociniis . . . videntes comites S. Abbani virum armigerum, horridissimum in incessu et habitu, cum simili turba militum . . . unusquisque hinc et inde cœpit se abscondere. Vir autem Dei fide armatus intrepidus viam ibat. . . . Ego autem qui vitam S. Abbani collegi sum nepos ipsius filii quem baptizavit." — *Vita S. Abbani*, ap. Colgan, lib. i. p. 617.

consenting; and after having prayed, gave him the assurance that these souls enjoyed eternal repose.[53]

Columba, thus reassured as to the fate of the victims of his rage, had still to be enlightened in respect to his own duty. He found the light which he sought from a holy monk called Molaise, famed for his studies of Holy Scripture,[54] who had already been his confessor, and whose ruined monastery is still visible in one of the isles of the Atlantic.[55] This severe hermit confirmed the decision of the synod: but to the obligation of converting to the Christian faith an equal number of pagans as there were of Christians killed in the civil war he added a new condition, which bore cruelly upon a soul so passionately attached to country and kindred. The confessor condemned his penitent to perpetual exile from Ireland.[56] Columba bowed to this sentence with sad resignation — "What you have commanded," he said, "shall be done."[57]

Molaise condemns him to perpetual exile.

He announced his future fate in the first place to his relations, the warlike Nialls of Tyrconnell. "An angel has taught me that I must leave Ireland and remain in exile as long as I live, because of all those whom you slew in the last battle, which you fought on my account, and also in others which you know of."[58] It is not recorded that any among his kindred attempted to hold him back; but when he acquainted his disciples with his intended emigration, twelve among them decided to follow him. The most ardent of all was a young monk called Mochonna, son of the provincial king of Ulster. In vain Columba represented to him that he ought not to abandon his parents and native soil. "It is thou," answered the young man, "who art my father, the Church is my mother, and my country is where I can gather the largest harvest for Christ." Then, in order to render all resistance impossible, he made a solemn vow aloud to leave his country and follow Columba — "I swear

Devotion of the young Mochonna.

[53] "Ut ores pro animabus illorum qui occisi fuerunt in bello commisso nuper nobis suadentibus, causa Ecclesiæ. . . . Et angelus ait: Requiem habebunt." — *Ibid.*, p. 624, after the MS. of Salamanca, which is more complete on this point than the ordinary text.

[54] "Visitavit S. Lasrianum confessorem suum. . . . Divinarum scripturarum scrutator."

[55] Innishmurry, on the coast of Sligo.

[56] *Vita S. Molassii*, ubi supra.

[57] "Quod indictum est, inquit ad Molassium, fiet." — O'Donnell, ii. 5.

[58] "Mihi, juxta quod ab angelo præmonitus sum, ex Hibernia migrandum est, et dum vixero exsulandum, quod mei causa per vos plurimi extincti sunt." — *Ibid.*, ii. 4.

to follow thee wherever thou goest, until thou hast led me to Christ, to whom thou hast consecrated me."[59] It was thus, says his historian, that he forced himself rather than offered himself as a companion to the great exile in the course of his apostolical career among the Picts — and he had no more active or devoted auxiliary.

Columba accepted, though not without sadness, as has been seen, the sentence of his friend. He dedicated the rest of his life to the expiation of his faults by a voluntary exile, and by preaching the faith to the heathen. Up to this time we have had difficulty in disentangling the principal events of the first forty years of his life from a maze of confused and contradictory narratives. We have followed what has seemed to us the most probable account, and one most calculated to throw light upon the character of the saint, his people, and his country. Henceforward we shall find a surer guide in Adamnan, who only touches very slightly upon the first half of his hero's life, and who, with an apparent contempt for the unanimous testimony of Irish witnesses, while agreeing that the departure of the saint took place after the battle in which the King of Ireland had been beaten by Columba's kindred,[60] attributes his departure solely to his desire for the conversion of the heathens of the great neighboring isle.[61]

CHAPTER II.

COLUMBA AN EMIGRANT IN CALEDONIA — THE HOLY ISLE OF IONA.

Aspect of the Hebridean archipelago. — Columba first lands at Oronsay, but leaves it because Ireland is visible from its shores. — Description of Iona. — First buildings of the new monastery. — What remains of it. — Enthu-

[59] "Se peregrinationis socium non magis obtulit, quam obtrusit. . . . Tu mihi pater es, Ecclesia mater, et patria ubi uberiorem bene merendi segetem et majorem Christo deserviendi ansam invenero. . . . Te quocumque ieris sequar, donec ad Christum perduxeris, cui me pridem consecraras." — O'Donnell. *Vita Columbæ*, lib. iii. c. 24, 25, 26.

[60] "Post bellum Cule Drebene . . . quo tempore vir beatus de Scotia peregrinaturus primitus enavigavit." — Adamn., i. 7. What is said of the poem called *Altus*, the composition of which was suggested by the remorse of Columba after his three battles, will be seen further on, p. 732.

[61] "De Scotis ad Britanniam pro Christo peregrinari volens, enavigavit." — Adamn., *Præf.* The MS. of Salamanca, quoted by Colgan, adds: "*Ad convertendos ad fidem Pictos.*"

siasm or Johnson on landing there in the eighteenth century. — Columba bitterly regrets his country. — Passionate elegies on the pains of exile. — Note upon the poem of *Altus*. — Proofs in his biography of the continuance of that patriotic regret. — The stork comes from Ireland to Iona.

He who has not seen the islands and gulfs of the western coast of Scotland, and who has not been tossed upon the sombre sea of the Hebrides, can scarcely form any image of it to himself. Nothing can be less seductive at the first glance than that austere and solemn nature, which is picturesque without charm, and grand without grace. The traveller passes sadly through an archipelago of naked and desert islands, sowed, like so many extinct volcanoes, upon the dull and sullen waters, which are sometimes broken by rapid currents and dangerous whirlpools. Except on rare days, when the sun — that pale sun of the North — gives life to these shores, the eye wanders over a vast surface of gloomy sea, broken at intervals by the whitening crest of waves, or by the foamy line of the tide, which dashes here against long reefs of rock, there against immense cliffs, with a forlorn roar which fills the air. Through the continual fogs and rains of that rude climate may be seen by times the summits of chains of mountains, whose abrupt and naked sides slope to the sea, and whose base is bathed by those cold waves which are kept in constant agitation by the shock of contrary currents, and the tempests of wind which burst from the lakes and narrow ravines farther inland. The melancholy of the landscape is relieved only by that peculiar configuration of the coast, which has been remarked by the ancient authors, and especially by Tacitus — a configuration which exists besides only in Greece and Scandinavia.[62] As in the fiords of Norway, the sea cuts and hollows out the shores of the islands into a host of bays and gulfs, of strange depth, and as narrow as profound.[63] These gulfs take the most varied forms, penetrating by a thousand tortuous folds into the middle of the

[62] "Nusquam latius dominari mare, multum fluminum huc atque illuc ferre, nec littore tenus adcrescere aut resorberi, sed influere penitus atque ambire, etiam jugis atque montibus inseri velut in suo." — Tacitus, *Agricolæ Vita*. c. 10. "Diversorum prolixioribus promontoriorum tractibus, quæ arenatis Oceani sinibus ambiuntur." — Gildas, vol. iii. p. 11, ed. Stevens.

[63] "Mare, quo latus ingens
Dant scopuli, et multa litus se valle receptat."
Perseus, Sat. vi.

These lines of Perseus upon the *Riviera* of Genoa describe still better the western coast of Scotland.

land, as if to identify themselves with the long and winding lakes of the Highland interior. Numberless peninsulas, terminating in pointed headlands, or summits covered with clouds; isthmuses so narrow as to leave the sea visible at both sides; straits so closely shut between two walls of rock that the eye hesitates to plunge into that gloom; enormous cliffs of basalt or of granite, their sides perforated with rents; caverns, as at Staffa, lofty as churches, flanked through all their length by prismatic columns, through which the waves of the ocean dash with groans; and here and there, in contrast with that wild majesty, perhaps in an island, perhaps upon the shore of the main land, a sandy beach, a little plain covered with scanty prickling grass; a natural port, capable of sheltering a few frail boats; everywhere, in short, a strangely varied combination of land and sea, but where the sea carries the day, penetrates and dominates everything, as if to affirm her empire, and, as Tacitus has said, "*inseri velut in suo.*"

Such is the present aspect — such must have been, with the addition of the forests which have disappeared, the aspect of those shores when Columba sought them to continue and end his life there. It was from this point that he was to assail the Land of Woods,[64] that unconquerable Caledonia, where the Romans had been obliged to relinquish the idea of establishing themselves, where Christianity hitherto had appeared only to vanish, and which for long seemed to Europe almost outside the boundaries of the world. To Columba was to fall the honor of introducing civilization into the stony, sterile, and icy *Escosse la Sauvage*,[65] which the imagination of our fathers made the dwelling-place of hunger, and of the prince of demons. Sailing by these distant shores, who could refrain from evoking the holy memory and forgotten glory of the great missionary? It is from him that Scotland has derived that religious spirit which, led astray as it has been since the Reformation, and in spite of its own rigid narrowness, remains still so powerful, so popular, so fruitful, and

[64] In Gaelic, *Calyddon*, land of forests, according to Augustin Thierry; according to Camden this name is derived from *kaled*, which means hard and wild.

[65] See the expressions of Jean de Meung, Froissart, and others, collected by M. Francisque Michel, in his fine and learned work, *Les Ecossais en France et les Français en Ecosse*, printed by Gounouilhou, Bordeaux, 1862, p. 3–5. The words addressed by St. Louis when sick to his son are well known: "I pray thee to make thyself loved by the people of thy kingdom; for if thou rulest ill, I had rather that a Scot came from Scotland and reigned in thy place." — JOINVILLE, p. 4.

so free.[66] Half veiled by the misty distance, Columba stands first among those original and touching historical figures to whom Scotland owes the great place she has occupied in the memory and imagination of modern nations, from the noble chivalry of the feudal and Catholic kingdom of the Bruces and Douglases, down to the unparalleled misfortunes of Mary Stuart and Charles Edward, and all the poetic and romantic recollections which the pure and upright genius of Walter Scott has endowed with European fame.

A voluntary exile, at the age of forty-two, from his native island, Columba embarked with his twelve companions[67] in one of those great barks of osier covered with hide which the Celtic nations employed for their navigation. He landed upon a desert island situated on the north of the opening of that series of gulfs and lakes which, extending from the south-west to the north-east, cuts the Caledonian peninsula in two, and which at that period separated the still heathen Picts from the district occupied by the Irish Scots, who were partially Christianized. This isle, which he has made immortal, took from him the name of I-Colm-Kill (the island of Columb-Kill), but is better known under that of Iona.[68] A legend, suggested by one of our saint's most marked characteristics, asserts that he first landed upon another islet called Oronsay,[68a] but that, having climbed a hill near the shore immediately on landing, he found that he could still see Ireland, his beloved country. To see far off that dear soil which he had left forever, was too hard a trial. He came down from the hill, and immediately took to his boat to seek, farther off, a shore from which he could not see his native land. When he had reached Iona he climbed the highest point in the island, and, gazing into the distance,

Columba lands at Iona.

[66] This is evidenced by the wonderful outburst of the *Free Kirk*, produced in 1843 by a local dispute upon the lay patronage of parishes, and which has established in almost every village of Scotland a new community and a new church, sustained by voluntary contributions in face of the official Church, which continues to hold a portion of the ecclesiastical possessions of Catholic times.

[67] See their names in Appendix A of Reeves. Let us at present remark two among them whom we shall meet again further on — Baithen, Columba's secretary, and his successor as abbot of Iona, and Diormit or Dermott, his minister (*ministrator*), the monk specially attached to his person, after the young Mochonna, of whom mention has already been made.

[68] The primitive name was *Hy*, *Hii*, or *I*— that is to say, the isle, *the* isle *par excellence*. Iona, according to various authors, means the blessed isle. This last word is written Iova by Adamnan and the ancient authors; but usage has turned it into Iona.

[68a] To the south of Colonsay, not far from the large island of Islay.

found no longer any trace of Ireland upon the horizon. He decided, accordingly, to remain upon this unknown rock. One of those heaps of stones, which are called *cairns* in the Celtic dialect, still marks the spot where Columba made this desiredly unfruitful examination, and has long borne the name of the Cairn of Farewell.[69]

Description of the isle of Iona.

Nothing could be more sullen and sad than the aspect of this celebrated isle, where not a single tree has been able to resist either the blighting wind or the destroying hand of man. Only three miles in length by two in breadth, flat and low, bordered by gray rocks which scarcely rise above the level of the sea, and overshadowed by the high and sombre peaks of the great island of Mull,[70] it has not even the wild beauty which is conferred upon the neighboring isles and shores by their basalt cliffs, which are often of prodigious height — or which belongs to the hills, often green and rounded at the summit, whose perpendicular sides are beaten incessantly by those Atlantic waves, which bury themselves in resounding caverns hollowed by the everlasting labors of that tumultuous sea. Upon the narrow surface of the island white stretches of sand alternate with scanty pastures, a few poor crops, and the turf-moors where the inhabitants find their fuel. Poor as the culture is, it seems everywhere resisted and disputed by the gneiss rocks, which continually crop out, and in some places form an almost inextricable labyrinth. The only attraction possessed by this sombre dwelling-place is the view of the sea, and of the mountains of Mull and the other islands, to the number of twenty or thirty, which may be distinguished from the top of the northern hill of Iona.[71] Among these is Staffa, celebrated for the grotto of Fingal, which has been known only for about a century, and which, in the time of Columba, moaned and murmured in its solitary and unknown

[69] *Carn cul ri Erin* — literally, *the back turned on Ireland.* Many historians are of opinion that the isle had been formerly inhabited by Druids, whose burying-place is still shown — *Clachnan Druineach.* O'Donnell says that they resisted the landing of the Irish emigrants; but Dr. Reeves contests this idea with very strong arguments. His edition of Adamnan contains a detailed map of Iona, with all the names of places in Celtic.

[70] "Where a turret's airy head
O'erlooked, dark Mull! thy mighty Sound,
Where thwarting tides, with mingled roar,
Part thy swarth hills from Morven's shore."
WALTER SCOTT, *Lord of the Isles*, i. 7.

[71] This hill, the highest in the island, is only 320 feet above the level of the sea.

majesty, in the midst of that Hebridean archipelago which is at present haunted by so many curious admirers of the Highland shores and ruined feudal castles, which the great bard of our century has enshrined in the glory of his verse.[72]

The bay where Columba landed is still called the *bay of the osier bark, Port' a Churraich;* and a long mound is pointed out to strangers as representing the exact size of his boat, which was sixty feet long. The emigrant did not remain in this bay, which is situated in the middle of the isle; he went higher up, and, to find a little shelter from the great sea winds, chose for his habitation the eastern shore, opposite the large island of Mull, which is separated from Iona only by a narrow channel of a mile in breadth, and whose highest mountains,[73] situated more to the east, approach and almost identify themselves with the mountain-tops of Morven, which are continually veiled with clouds. It was there that the emigrants built their huts of branches, for the island was not then, as now, destitute of wood.[74] When Columba had made up his mind to construct for himself and his people a settled establishment, the buildings of the new-born monastery were of the greatest simplicity. As in all Celtic constructions, walls of withes or branches, supported upon long wooden props, formed the principal element in their architecture. Climbing plants, especially ivy, interlacing itself in the interstices of the branches, at once ornamented and consolidated the modest shelter of the missionaries.[75] The Irish built scarcely any churches of stone, and retained, up to the twelfth century, as St. Bernard testifies, the habit of building their churches of wood. But it was not for some years after their first establishment that the monks of Iona permitted themselves the luxury of a wooden church; and when they did so, great

First establishment of the new monastery.

[72] In the *Lord of the Isles* Scott has given a poetic itinerary of all the archipelago so frequented by St. Columba. The powerful Celtic dynasties who, under the title of Lords of the Isles, ruled the Hebrides during the middle ages, were of the clan Macdonald: their sway extended over the district of Morven, which is the part of the main land nearest to Iona.

[73] The highest mountain in Mull is 3178 feet in height.

[74] It is said that Columba retired *in saltibus* to pray. At present the inhabitants of Iona have no other wood than that which is thrown by the sea upon the beach. See in the Appendix No. 1 some notes upon the present condition of Iona.

[75] "Virgarum fasciculos ad hospitium construendum. . . . Binales sudes." — Adamnan, ii. 3–7. Dr. Reeves has put together several ancient authorities upon the materials of chapels and churches in Wales and Brittany. "Virgis torquatis muros perficientes . . . musco silvestri solum et hederæ nexibus adornato. . . . Virgas et fenum ad materiam cellæ construendæ . . ."

oaks, such as the sterile and wind-beaten soil of their islet could not produce, had to be brought for its construction from the neighboring shore.[76]

Thus the monastic capital of Scotland, and the centre of Christian civilization in the north of Great Britain, came into being thirteen centuries ago. Some ruins of a much later date than the days of Columba, though still very ancient, mingled among a few cottages scattered on the shore, still point out the site.

"We were now treading," said, in the eighteenth century, the celebrated Johnson, who was the first to recall the attention of the British public to this profaned sanctuary — "we were now treading that illustrious island which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavored, and would be foolish, if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona!"[77]

Columba, who had been initiated into classic recollections, like all the monks of his time, had no doubt heard of Marathon; but certainly it could never have occurred to him that a day would come in which a descendant of the race he came to save should place his humble shelter in the same rank with the most glorious battle-field of Hellenic history.

Columba passionately regrets his country.

Far from having any prevision of the glory of Iona, his soul was still swayed by a sentiment which never abandoned him — regret for his lost country. All his life he retained for Ireland the passionate tenderness of an exile, a love which displayed itself in the songs which have been preserved to us, and which date perhaps from the first moments of his exile. It is possible that their authenticity is not altogether beyond dispute; and that,

[76] "Cum roborcæ . . . duodecim currucis congregatis, materiæ ad nostrum renovandum traherentur monasterium."

[77] Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides.*

like the poetic lamentations given forth by Fortunatus in the name of St. Radegund,[78] they were composed by his disciples and contemporaries. But they have been too long repeated as his, and depict too well what must have passed in his heart, to permit us to neglect them. "Death in faultless Ireland is better than life without end in Albyn." After this cry of despair follow strains more plaintive and submissive. In one of his elegies,[79] he laments that he can no longer sail on the lakes and bays of his native island, nor hear the song of the swans, with his friend Comgall. He laments above all to have been driven from Erin by his own fault, and because of the blood shed in his battles. He envies his friend Cormac, who can go back to his dear monastery at Durrow, and hear the wind sigh among the oaks, and the song of the blackbird and cuckoo. As for Columba, all is dear to him in Ireland *except the princes who reign there.* This last particular shows the persistence of his political rancor. No trace of this feeling, however, remains in a still more characteristic poem,[80] which must have been confided to some traveller as a message from the exile of Iona to his country. In this he celebrates, as always, the delight of voyaging round the coast of Ireland, and the beauty of its cliffs and beach. But, above all, he mourns over his exile: —

"What joy to fly upon the white-crested sea, and to watch the waves break upon the Irish shore! what joy to row the little bark, and land among the whitening foam upon the Irish shore! Ah! how my boat would fly if its prow were turned to my Irish oak-grove! But the noble sea now carries me only to Albyn,[81] the land of ravens. My foot is in my little boat, but my sad heart ever bleeds. There is a gray eye which ever turns to Erin; but never in this life shall it see Erin, nor her sons, nor her daughters.[82] From the high prow

[78] See *ante*, p. 488.

[79] Published by Reeves, Appendix, p. 275.

[80] Reeves, p. 285–87. The original text of this poem is in very ancient Irish.

[81] *Alba*, *Albania*, is the name generally applied by Irish writers to that part of Great Britain which afterwards became Scotland. It is evidently the same as *Albion*, and later took the form of *Albany*, which has been always employed in the heraldic language of the two kingdoms as a title borne by the princes of the royal house. Everybody knows that the widow of Charles Edward, when married a second time to Alfieri, called herself Countess of Albany.

[82] This seems to refer to a vow which he is said to have made at the moment of his departure, to see neither man nor woman of his country — a vow which he evaded on his journey to the national assembly of Drum-

I look over the sea, and great tears are in my gray eye when I turn to Erin — to Erin, where the song of the birds are so sweet, and where the clerks sing like the birds; where the young are so gentle, and the old so wise; where the great men are so noble to look at, and the women so fair to wed. Young traveller, carry my sorrows with thee, carry them to Comgall of eternal life. Noble youth, take my prayer with thee, and my blessing; one part for Ireland — seven times may she be blessed! and the other for Albyn. Carry my blessing across the sea — carry it to the west. My heart is broken in my breast: if death comes to me suddenly, it will be because of the great love I bear to the Gael.[83]

His regret lasts all his life.

But it was not only in these elegies, repeated and perhaps retouched by Irish bards and monks, but at each instant of his life, in season and out of season, that this love and passionate longing for his native country burst forth in words and in musings; the narratives of his most trustworthy biographers are full of it. The most severe penance which he could imagine for the guiltiest sinners who came to confess to him, was to impose upon them the same fate which he had voluntarily inflicted upon himself — never to set foot again upon Irish soil.[84] But when, instead of forbidding to sinners all access to that beloved isle, he had to smother his envy of those who had the right and happiness to go there at their pleasure, he dared scarcely trust himself to name its name; and when speaking to his guests, or to the

Ceitt by covering his eyes with a bandage, over which he drew his cowl. — Reeves.

[83] The *Gaoidhil* or *Gaedhil*. This was the name which the Irish gave themselves before the Roman missionaries had given them the name of *Scoti*. It is generally argued that the best known and most authentic, though in our opinion the least interesting, of Columba's Latin poems, dates from the first years of his sojourn at Iona. It is called by the name of *Altus*, from the first word of the first verse —

"Altus prosator vertustus dierum et ingenitus."

It is composed of twenty-four stanzas. The first word of each verse begins with a different letter, in the order of the letters of the alphabet. Each verse comments in very imaginative language on a text of Scripture, indicated in the argument, on such subjects as the Creation, the Fall, Hell, the Last Judgment, &c. The argument (in Irish) of this poem expressly states that it was suggested to Columba by his desire to obtain the pardon of God for his three battles. The text has been published by Colgan. Dr. Todd announces a more complete edition. Colgan states formally that the poem was composed at Iona. He adds that, according to some, the saint occupied some years in meditation on the subject before he wrote it; and that, according to others, he sent it to Pope Gregory the Great, who received it with the most sympathetic respect.

[84] See further on an incident related by Adamnan, i. 22.

monks who were to return to Ireland, he could only say to them, "You will return to the country that you love."[85]

His solicitude for the stork which came from Ireland.

This melancholy patriotism never faded out of his heart, and was evidenced much later in his life by an incident which shows an obstinate regret for his lost Ireland, along with a tender and careful solicitude for all the creatures of God. One morning he called one of the monks and said to him, "Go and seat thyself by the sea, upon the western bank of the island; there thou wilt see arrive from the north of Ireland and fall at thy feet a poor travelling stork, long beaten by the winds and exhausted by fatigue. Take her up with pity, feed her and watch her for three days; after three days' rest, when she is refreshed and strengthened, she will no longer wish to prolong her exile among us — she will fly to sweet Ireland, her dear country where she was born. I bid thee care for her thus, because she comes from the land where I, too, was born." Everything happened as he had said and ordered. The evening of the day on which the monk had received the poor traveller, as he returned to the monastery, Columba, asking him no questions, said to him, "God bless thee, my dear child, thou hast cared for the exile; in three days thou shalt see her return to her country." And, in fact, at the time mentioned the stork rose from the ground in her host's presence, and, after having sought her way for a moment in the air, directed her flight across the sea, straight upon Ireland.[86] The sailors of the Hebrides all know and tell this tale: and I love to think that among all my readers there is not one who would not fain have repeated or deserved Columba's blessing.

[85] "In tua quam amas patria . . . per multos eris annos." — Adamn., i. 17.

[86] "Nam de aquilonali Hiberniæ regione quædam hospita grus, valde fessa et fatigata, superveniet, coram te in litore cadens recumbet; quam misericorditer sublevare curabis, ad propinquam deportabis domum; et post expleto recreata triduo, nolens ultra apud nos peregrinari, ad priorem Scotiæ dulcem, unde orta, remeabit regionem . . . quam ideo tibi sic diligenter commendo, quia de nostræ paternitatis regione est oriunda. . . . Benedicat te Deus, mi fili, quia peregrinæ bene ministrasti hospitæ . . . quæ post ternos soles ad patriam repeqabit . . . paulisperque in aere viam speculata . . . recti volatus cursu ad Hiberniam se repedavit tranquillo." — Adamn., i. 48.

CHAPTER III.

THE APOSTOLATE OF COLUMBA AMONG THE SCOTS AND PICTS.

Moral transformation of Columba. — His progress in spiritual life. — His humility. — His charity. — His preaching by tears. — The hut which formed his abbatial palace at Iona. — His prayers; his work of transcription. — His crowd of visitors. — His severity in the examination of monastic vocations. — Aïdus the Black, the murderer of Columba's enemy King Diarmid, rejected by the community. — Penance of Libran of the Rushes. — Columba encourages the despairing and unmasks the hypocrites. — Monastic propaganda of Iona; Columba's fifty-three foundations in Scotland. — His relations with the people of Caledonia: First with the colony of Dalriadians from Ireland, whose king was his relative: he enlightens and confirms their imperfect Christianity. — Ambushes laid for his chastity. — His connection with the Picts, who occupied the north of Britain. — The *dorsum Britanniæ*. — Columba their first missionary. — The fortress gates of their king Brudus open before him. — He struggles with the Druids in their last refuge. — He preaches by an interpreter. — His respect for natural virtue. — Baptism of two old Pictish chiefs. — Columba's humanity: he redeems an Irish captive. — Frequent journeys among the Picts, whose conversion he accomplishes before he dies. — His fellow-workers, Malruve and Drostan; the Monastery of Tears.

However bitter the sadness might be with which exile filled the heart of Columba, it did not for a moment turn him from his work of expiation. As soon as he had installed himself with his companions in that desert isle, from whence the Christian faith and monastic life were about to radiate over the north of Great Britain, a gradual and almost complete transformation became apparent in him. Without giving up the lovable peculiarities of his character and race, he gradually became a model for penitents, and at the same time for confessors and preachers. Without ceasing to maintain an authority which was to increase with years, and which does not seem ever to have been disputed, over the monasteries which he had founded in Ireland, he applied himself at once to establish, on the double basis of manual and intellectual labor, the new insular community which was to be the centre of his future activity. Then he proceeded to unite himself in friendly relations with the inhabitants of the neighboring districts,

Change in Columba: his progress in spiritual life.

whom it was needful to evangelize or confirm in the faith, before thinking of carrying the light of the Gospel further off to the north. He prepared himself for this grand mission by miracles of fervor and austerity, as well as humble charity, to the great profit in the first place of his own monks, and afterwards of the many visitors who came, whether from Ireland or from the Caledonian shores, to seek at his side the healing or the consolation of penitence.

His humility and charity.

This man, whom we have seen so passionate, so irritable, so warlike and vindictive, became little by little the most gentle, the humblest, the most tender of friends and fathers. It was he, the great head of the Caledonian Church, who, kneeling before the strangers who came to Iona, or before the monks returning from their work, took off their shoes, washed their feet, and after having washed them respectfully kissed them. But charity was still stronger than humility in that transfigured soul. No necessity, spiritual or temporal, found him indifferent. He devoted himself to the solace of all infirmities, all misery, and pain, weeping often over those who did not weep for themselves.[87] These tears became the most eloquent part of his preaching, the means which he employed most willingly to subdue inveterate sinners, to arrest the criminal on the brink of the abyss, to appease and soften and change those wild and savage but simple and straightforward souls, whom God had given him to subdue.

In the midst of the new community Columba inhabited, instead of a cell, a sort of hut built of planks, and placed upon the most elevated spot within the monastic enclosure. Up to the age of seventy-six he slept there upon the hard floor, with no pillow but a stone. This hut was at once his study and his oratory. It was there that he gave himself up to those prolonged prayers which excited the admiration and almost the alarm of his disciples. It was there that he returned after sharing the out-door labor of his monks,[88] like the least among them, to consecrate the rest of his time to the study of Holy Scripture and the transcription of the sacred text. The work of transcription remained until his

Prayer and work.

[87] "Cum laborantibus laborabat, cum infirmantibus infirmabatur, cum flentibus semper, et cum non flentibus sæpe flebat. . . . Quando vel pervicaces in nefarium aliquod facinus ruentes cohibere non poterat . . . lacrymas ubertim emittebat." — O'Donnell, lib. iii. c. 40.

[88] "Nullum horæ momentulum transibat, quo non pie occupatum reperiri potuerit. . . . In manuali laboratione cum aliis fratribus non secus ac eorum minimus, collaborabat." — O'Donnell, *Vita quinta*, iii. 37, 39.

last day the occupation of his old age, as it had been the passion of his youth; it had such an attraction for him, and seemed to him so essential to a knowledge of the truth, that, as we have already said, three hundred copies of the Holy Gospels, copied by his own hand, have been attributed to him.

His crowd of visitors.

It was in the same hut that he received with unwearied patience the numerous and sometimes importunate visitors who soon flowed to him, and of whom sometimes he complained gently — as of that indiscreet stranger, who, desirous of embracing him, awkwardly overturned his ink upon the border of his robe.[89] These importunate guests did not come out of simple curiosity; they were most commonly penitent or fervid Christians, who, informed by the fishermen and inhabitants of the neighboring isles of the establishment of the Irish monk, who was already famous in his own country, and attracted by the growing renown of his virtues, came from Ireland, from the north and south of Britain, and even from the midst of the still heathen Saxons, to save their souls and gain heaven under the direction of a man of God.[90]

His scrupulous severity in the examination of monastic vocations.

Far from making efforts to attract or lightly admitting these neophytes, nothing in his life is more clearly established than the scrupulous severity with which he examined into all vocations, and into the admission of penitents. He feared nothing so much as that the monastic frock might serve as a shelter for criminals who sought in the cloister not only a place of penitence and expiation, but a shelter from human justice. On occasion he even blamed the too great facility of his friends and disciples. One of the latter, Finchan, had founded upon Eigg,[91] another Hebridean island, a community resembling that of Iona, and possibly dependent upon it: he had there admitted to clerical orders, and even to the priesthood, a prince of the clan of Picts established in Ireland, Aëdh or Aïdus, called the Black, a violent and bloodthirsty man, who had

[89] "Tuguriolum hospitiolum, in eminentiore loco fabricatum, in quo vir beatus scribebat. . . . Hospes molestus supervenit, sanctumque osculandum appetens, ora vestimenti inclinatum effudit atramenti corniculum." — ADAMNAN, i. 25.

[90] Adamnan has among the list of the first companions of the holy abbot the names of two Saxons, one of whom was a baker, and also that of a Briton, who died first of all the Iona monks. This was that Odhran or Orain who has left his name to the burying-ground, which is still called *Reilig Orain*. "Bonis actibus intentans qui primus apud nos in hac insula mortuus est." — ADAMNAN, iii. 6.

[91] To the north of Iona, near the large island of Skye.

assassinated Diarmid, the king of Ireland. It was this king, as will be remembered, who pronounced the unjust sentence which drove Columba frantic, and was the occasion of all his faults and misfortunes. The abbot of Iona was not the less on this account indignant at the weakness of his friend. "The hand which Finchan has laid, in the face of all justice and ecclesiastical law, upon the head of this son of perdition," said Columba, "shall rot and fall off, and be buried before the body to which it is attached. As for the false priest, the assassin, he shall himself be assassinated." This double prophecy was accomplished.[92]

Let us lend an ear to the following dialogue which Columba held with one of those who sought shelter under his discipline. It will explain the moral and spiritual condition of that age better than many commentaries, and will, besides, show the wonderful influence which Columba, penitent and exiled in the depths of his distant island, exercised over all Ireland. It was one day announced to him that a stranger had just landed from Ireland, and Columba went to meet him in the house reserved for guests, to talk to him in private, and question him as to his dwelling-place, his family, and the cause of his journey. The stranger told him that he had undertaken this painful voyage in order, under the monastic habit and in exile, to expiate his sins. Columba, desirous of trying the reality of his penitence, drew a most repulsive picture of the hardship and difficult obligations of the new life. "I am ready," said the stranger, "to submit to the most cruel and humiliating conditions that thou canst command me." And after having made confession, he swore, still upon his knees, to accomplish all the requirements of penitence. "It is well," said the abbot; "now rise from thy knees, seat thyself, and listen; you must first do penance for seven years in the neighboring island of Tiree, after which I will see you again." "But," said the penitent, still agitated by remorse, "how can I expiate a perjury of which I have not yet spoken? Before I left my own country I killed a poor man. I was about to suffer the punishment of death for that crime, and I was already in irons,

Library of the Rushes.

[92] "Finchanus, Christi miles, Aidum . . . regio genere ortum, Cruthinium gente, de Scotia ad Britanniam sub clericatus habitu secum adduxit. . . . Qui valde sanguinarius homo et multorum fuerat trucidator. . . . Darmitium totæ Scotiæ regnatorem Deo auctore ordinatum interfecerat. . . . Manus . . . contra fas et jus ecclesiasticum super caput filii perditionis, mox computrescet." — ADAMNAN, i. 36.

when one of my relations, who is very rich, delivered me by paying the composition demanded. I swore that I would serve him all the rest of my life; but after some days of service I abandoned him, and here I am, notwithstanding my oath." Upon this the saint added that he would only be admitted to the paschal communion after seven years of penitence. When these were completed, Columba, after having given him the communion with his own hand, sent him back to Ireland to his patron, carrying a sword with an ivory handle for his ransom. The patron, however, moved by the entreaties of his wife, gave the penitent his pardon without ransom. "Why should we accept the price sent to us by the holy Columba? We are not worthy of it. The request of such an intercessor should be granted freely. His blessing will do more for us than any ransom." And immediately he detached the girdle from his waist, which was the ordinary formula in Ireland for the manumission of captives or slaves. Columba had besides commanded his penitent to remain with his old father and mother until he had rendered to them the last services. This accomplished, his brothers let him go, saying, "Far be it from us to detain a man who has labored for seven years for the salvation of his soul with the holy Columba." He then returned to Iona, bringing with him the sword which was to have been his ransom. "Henceforward thou shalt be called Libran, for thou art free, and emancipated from all ties," said Columba; and he immediately admitted him to take the monastic vows. But when he was commanded to return to Tiree, to end his life at a distance from Columba, poor Libran, who up to this moment had been so docile, fell on his knees and wept bitterly. Columba, touched by his despair, comforted him, as best he could, without, however, altering his sentence. "Thou shalt live far from me, but thou shalt die in one of my monasteries, and thou shalt rise again with my monks, and have part with them in heaven," said the abbot. Such was the history of Libran, called Libran of the Rushes, because he had passed many years in gathering rushes — the years probably of his penitence.[93]

[93] "Libranus de *Arundineto* . . . plebeius nuper, sumpto clericatus habitu . . . ad delenda in peregrinatione peccamina longo fatigatum itinere. . . . Cui sanctus, ut de suæ pœnitudinis exploraret qualitate, dura et laboriosa ante oculos monasterialia proposuisset imperia. . . . Paratus sum ad omnia quæcumque mihi jubere volueris, quamlibet durissima, quamlibet indigna. . . . Surge et reside. . . . Quid agere oportet de quodam meo falso juramento? Nam in patria trucidavi homuncionem. . . . Machæram belluinis

This doctor, learned in penitence, became day by day more gifted in the great art of ruling souls; and, with a hand as prudent as vigorous, raised up on one side the wounded and troubled conscience — while, on the other, he unveiled the false monks and false penitents. To a certain monk, who, in despair at having yielded during a journey to the temptations of a woman, rushed from confessor to confessor without ever finding himself sufficiently repentant or sufficiently punished, he restored peace and confidence, by showing him that his despair was nothing but an infernal hallucination, and by inflicting upon him a penance hard enough to convince him of the remission of his sin.[94] To another sinner from Ireland, who, guilty of incest and fratricide, had insisted, whether Columba pleased or not, on taking refuge in Iona, he imposed perpetual exile from his native country, and twelve years of penance among the savages of Caledonia, predicting at the same time that the false penitent would perish in consequence of refusing this expiation.[95] Arriving one day in a little community formed by himself in one of the neighboring islets,[96] and intended to receive the penitents during their time of probation, he gave orders that certain delicacies should be added to their usual repast, and that even the penitents should be permitted to enjoy them. One of the latter, however, more scrupulous than needful, refused to accept the improved fare, even from the hand of the abbot. "Ah!" said Columba, "thou refusest the solace which is offered to thee by thy superior and myself. A day will come when thou shalt again be a robber as thou hast been, and shalt

He encourages the penitents, and unmasks the hypocrites.

ornatam dolatis dentibus. . . . Ut quid nobis hoc accipere quod sanctus pretium misit Columba? Hoc non sumus digni . . . liberetur ei pius hic gratis ministrator. . . . Continuo gratis liberavit servum . . . cingulum ex more captivi de lumbis resolvens. . . . Ut tanto tempore patri debitam, sed neglectam redintegres pietatem. . . . Nullo modo nos oportet fratrem in patria retentare qui per septem annos apud S. Columbam in Britannia salutem exercuit animæ. . . . Tu Libranus vocaberis quod sis liber. . . . Qui ideo Arundineti est vocitatus, quia in arundineto multis annis arundines colligendo laboraverat." His death occurred long after that of Columba, at Durrow, one of the first of the great abbot's foundations in Ireland. — ADAMNAN, ii. 39.

[94] "Magna est, o frater, hallucinatio tua. Ego quindecim tibi annos in pane et aqua jejunandos pro pœnitentia injungo, quo tibi vel ipsa pœnitentiæ gravitas persuadeat peccatum tuum esse remissum." — O'DONNELL, vol. i. c. 24.

[95] "Si duodecim annis inter Brittones cum fletu et lachrymis pœnitentiam egeris, nec ad Scotiam usque ad mortem reversus fueris, forsan Deus peccato ignoscat tuo." — ADAMNAN, i. 22.

[96] Himba, the modern name of which is unknown.

steal, and eat the venison in the forests wherever thou goest." And this prophecy too was fulfilled.[97]

Notwithstanding these precautions, and his apparent severity, the number of neophytes who sought the privilege of living under the rule of Columba increased more and more. Every day, and every minute of the day, the abbot and his companions, in the retirement of their cells, or at their outdoor labors, heard great cries addressed to them from the other side of the narrow strait which separates Iona from the neighboring island of Mull. These shouts were the understood signal by which those who sought admission to Iona gave notice of their presence, that the boat of the monastery might be sent to carry them over.[98] Among the crowds who crossed in that boat some sought only material help, alms, or medicines; but the greater part sought permission to do penance, and to pass a shorter or longer time in the new monastery, where Columba put their vocation to so many trials. Once only was he known to have at the very moment of their arrival imposed, so to speak, the monastic vows, upon two pilgrims, whose virtues and approaching death had been by a supernatural instinct revealed to him.[99]

Monastic propaganda of Iona. Foundations of Columba in Scotland.

The narrow enclosure of Iona was soon too small for the increasing crowd, and from this little monastic colony issued in succession a swarm of similar colonies, which went forth to plant new communities, daughters of Iona, in the neighboring isles, and on the main land of Caledonia, all of which were under the authority of Columba. Ancient traditions attribute to him the foundation of three hundred monasteries or churches, as many in Caledonia as in Hibernia, a hundred of which were in the islands or upon the sea-shore of the two countries. Modern learning has discovered and registered the existence of ninety churches, whose origin goes back to Columba, and to all or almost all of which, according to the custom of the

[97] "Ut etiam pœnitentibus aliqua præcipit consolatio indulgeretur. . . . Erit tempus quo cum furacibus furtive carnem in sylva manducabis." — ADAMNAN, i. 21.

[98] "Alia die, ultra fretum Ionæ insulæ clamatum est, quem sanctus, sedens in tuguriolo tabulis suffulto audiens, clamorem. . . . Mane eadem quarta feria, alius ultra fretum clamitabat proselytus. . . . Quadam die, quemdam ultra fretum audiens clamitantem, sanctus. . . . Valde miserandus est ille clamitans homo, qui aliqua ad carnalia medicamenta petiturus pertinentia, ad nos venit. . . . Ite, ait, celeriter peregrinosque de longinqua venientes regione, ad nos ocius adducite." — ADAMNAN, i. 25, 26, 27, 32, 43.

[99] "Apud me, ut dicitis, anni unius spatio peregrinari non poteritis, nisi prius monachicum promiseretis votum." — ADAMNAN, i. 32.

time, monastic communities must have been attached.[100] Traces of fifty-three of these churches remain still in modern Scotland, unequally divided among the districts inhabited by the two races which then shared Caledonia between them.[101] Thirty-two are in the western isles, and the country occupied by the Irish-Scots, and the twenty-one others mark the principal stations of the great missionary in the land of the Picts. The most enlightened judges among the Scotch Protestants agree in attributing to the teachings of Columba — to his foundations and his disciples — all the primitive churches, and the very ancient parochial division of Scotland.[102]

Connection of Columba with the population of Caledonia.

But it is time to tell what the population was whose confidence Columba had thus gained, and from which the communities of his monastic family were recruited. The portion of Great Britain which received the name of Caledonia did not include the whole of modern Scotland; it embraced only the districts to the north of the isthmus which separates the Clyde from the Forth, or Glasgow from Edinburgh. All this region to the north and to the east was in the hands of those terrible Picts whom the Romans had been unable to conquer, and who were the terror of the Britons. But to the west and south-west, on the side where Columba landed, he found a colony of his own country and race — that is to say, the Scots of Ireland, who were destined to become the sole masters of Caledonia, and to bestow

The Irish colony of Dalriadians in Scotland.

[100] Jocelyn, in his *Vie de St. Patrice*, c. 89, attributes a hundred to him; and this number is increased to three hundred by O'Donnell, book iii. c. 32. Colgan has named sixty-six of which Columba must have been, directly or indirectly, the founder (six more than St. Bernard). Fifty-eight of these foundations were in Ireland. But Colgan regards as founded by him almost all the churches built in Scotland before his death in 597. Bede, iii. 4, seems to give Durrow and Iona as the only direct foundations of Columba, and the others as proceeding from these two: "Ex utroque monasterio plurima exinde monasteria per discipulos et in Britannia et in Scotia propagata sunt." But he evidently is in the wrong, so far at least as Derry is concerned. All the communities erected under the supremacy of the abbot of Iona bore the name of *Familia Columba-Cille.*

[101] The enumeration of Dr. Reeves (Appendix H) might be much augmented, according to what he himself says. The thirty-two churches or monasteries *inter Scottos* comprehended those of the Hebridean isles, such as Skye, Mull, Oronsay, even down to the distant islet of St. Kilda, one of the three churches of which bears his name. In those *inter Pictos* is included Inchcolm, an island near Edinburgh. These fifty-three, and the thirty-seven already brought to light by Dr. Reeves, make very nearly the number of one hundred given by the author of the *Vie de St. Patrice.*

[102] See specially Cosmo Innes, the modest and learned author of the excellent works entitled *Scotland in the Middle Ages*, 1860, and *Sketches of Early Scottish History*, 1861.

upon it the name of Scotland.[103] More than half a century before, following in the train of many similar invasions or emigrations, a colony of Irish, or, according to the name then in use, of Scots, belonging to the tribe of Dalriadians,[104] had crossed the sea which separates the north-east coast of Ireland from the north-west of Great Britain, and had established itself — between the Picts of the north and the Britons of the south — in the islands and upon the western coast of Caledonia, north of the mouth of the Clyde, and in the district which has since taken the name of Argyll. The chiefs or kings of this Dalriadian colony, who were destined to become the parent stock of those famous and unfortunate Stuarts who once reigned over both Scotland and England, had at that time strengthened their growing power by the aid of the Niall princes who reigned in the north of Ireland, and to whose family Columba belonged. Columba had also a very close tie of kindred with the Dalriadians themselves, his paternal grandmother having been the daughter of Lorn, the first, or one of the first kings of the colony.[105] He was thus a relation of King Connal, the sixth successor of Lorn, who, at the moment of Columba's arrival, had been for three years the chief of the Scotic emigrants in Caledonia. Iona, where the abbot established himself, was at the northern extremity of the then

509-563.

Columba is related to their chiefs.

[103] We again repeat what it required all the learning of Ussher, White, Colgan, and Ward to prove — namely, that the holy and learned Scotia of the ancients was Ireland. The name of Scotia became the exclusive possession of the Scotch — that is to say, of the Irish colonists in Caledonia — only in the eleventh or twelfth century, in the time of Giraldus Cambrensis, at the moment when the power of the true Scots declined in Scotland under the influence of the Anglo-Norman conquest. The Bollandists have applied the very appropriate name of *Scotia Nova* or *Hiberno-Scotia* to the Scotic colonies in Scotland. — *Vita S. Cadroë*, ap. ACT. SS. MARTII, vol. i. p. 473, and *Vita S. Domnani*, ACT. SS. APRILIS, vol. ii. 487. The modern English also use a title historically exact in describing as North Britain the kingdom of Scotland since its union with England. M. Varin, in the papers which we have already quoted, has proved the obscurity of the political and religious origin of Caledonia. He remarks that, of the three primitive populations successively noted in that part of Great Britain, the only one which has retained its name is that which was the last to arrive upon the soil, which from it is still called Scotland. He is even disposed to believe that Ireland sometimes claimed for herself the credit of the civil and religious acts accomplished in her colony.

[104] These Dalriadians were themselves descended from Picts, who, under the name of *Cruithne* or *Cruithnii*, had long swayed a part of Ireland. — See REEVES, pp. 33, 67, and 94; O'KELLY, notes to the new edition of *Cambrensis Eversus*, of Lynch, vol. i. pp. 436, 463, 495. In Columba's time they still occupied the counties of Antrim and Down.

[105] See the genealogical table of REEVES, p. 8, note 4.

very limited domain of the Dalriadians, and might be regarded as a dependency of their new state, not less than of that of the Picts, who occupied all the rest of Caledonia. Columba immediately entered into alliance with this prince. He visited him in his residence on the main land, and obtained from him, in his double title of cousin and countryman, a gift of the uninhabited island where he had just established his community.[106]

He enlightens and completes their imperfect Christianity.

These Scots who had left Ireland after the conversion of the island by St. Patrick were probably Christians, like all the Irish, at least in name; but no certain trace of ecclesiastical organization or of monastic institutions is visible among them before Columba's arrival at Iona. The apostolate of Ninian and of Palladius does not seem to have produced a durable impression upon them any more than upon the southern Picts.[107] A new apostolical enterprise by Celtic monks was necessary to renew the work at which the Roman missionaries had labored a century before.[108] Columba and his disciples neglected no means of fortifying and spreading religion among their countrymen, who were emigrants like themselves. We see him in the narratives of Adamnan administering baptism and the other rites of religion to the people of Scotic race, through whose lands he passed, planting there the first foundations of monastic communities. Many narratives, more or less legendary, indicate that this people, even when Christian, had great need to be instructed, directed, and established in the good way; while at the same time the Dalriadians showed a certain suspicion and doubt of the new apostle of their race, which only yielded to the prolonged influence of his self-devotion and unquestionable virtue.

Columba was still in the flower of his age when he established himself at Iona; he was not more at the most than forty-two. All testimonies agree in celebrating his manly beauty, his remarkable height, his sweet and sonorous voice, the cordiality of his manner, the gracious dignity of his deportment and person.[109] These external advantages, added to

[106] Tighernach, *Annales;* Adamnan, 574, i. 7.

[107] This explains the name of *apostates* given by St. Patrick to the Scots and Picts of his time — "Socii Scotorum atque Pictorum apostatarum . . . pessimorum atque apostatarum Pictorum."

[108] The Irish Scots, newly converted, reconquered to Christianity the Scots of Caledonia. The Picts, forgetful of Ninian and of Rome, received the gospel the second time from Hibernia in the name of Britain. — Varin, 2d paper.

[109] "Erat aspectu angelicus. . . . Omnibus carus, hilarem semper faciem

the fame of his austerities and the inviolable purity of his life, made a singular and varied impression upon the pagans and the very imperfect Christians of Caledonia. The Dalriadian king put his virtue to the proof by presenting to him his daughter, who was remarkably beautiful, and clothed in the richest ornaments. He asked if the sight of a creature so beautiful and so adorned did not excite some inclination in him. "Without doubt," answered the missionary, "the inclination of the flesh and of nature; but understand well, lord king, that not for all the empire of the world, even could its honors and pleasures be secured to me to the end of time, would I yield to my natural weakness."[110] About the same time, a woman who lived not far from Iona spread for him a more dangerous and subtle snare. The celebrated and handsome exile having inspired her with a violent and guilty passion, she conceived the idea of seducing him, and succeeded in drawing him to her house. But as soon as he understood her design, he addressed to her an exhortation upon death and the last judgment, which he ended by blessing her, and making the sign of the cross. The temptress was thus delivered even from her own temptations. She continued to love him, but with a religious respect. It is added that she herself became a model of holiness.[111]

His chastity put to trial by the king and by a neighbor.

ostendens . . . cujus alta proceritas. . . ." — Adamn., *Præf.*, and i. 1. "Vir tantæ deditus austeritati . . . tamen exteriori forma et corporis habitu speciosus, genis rubicundus et vultu hilaris . . . semper apparebat et omnibus. . . . Colloquio affabilem, benignum, jucundum et interior is lætitiæa Spiritu Sancto infusæ indicia, hilari vultu prodentem se semper exhibebat." — O'Donnell, *Vita quinta*, l. iii. c. 43.

[110] "Puellam valde speciosam purpura, auro, gemmis, aliisque id generis regii amictus ornamentis . . . exornatam . . . coram S. Columba sistit. . . . Percontatus an filiæ et pulchritudo et ornatus placeant. Respondit sanctus omnino placere. Iterum compellat an non etiam ejus formæ ducatur complacentia. . . . Respondit se natura ad talem complacentiam propensum esse. Ecce, inquit rex . . . hiccine est qui nullo carnali desiderio inquinatus deprædicatur? Tunc S. Columba . . . O rex, sciat altitudo tua, et si insita carnis propensio meam naturam ad prohibitas inclinet complacentias, pro universi tamen imperio, honoribus et voluptatibus, si usque mundi finem ad concederetur, me nolle talibus complacenter indulgere." — O'Donnell, lib. ii. c. 39. The king who figures in this anecdote does not appear to have been Aïdan, as O'Donnell would assert. Aïdan began to reign over the Scotic colony only in 574, eleven years after the arrival of Columba at Iona. It must have been his predecessor Connell.

[111] "Ipsum in Ionam jam commorantem, multisque . . . percelebrem. . . . Quamdam de vicino feminam S. viri concupiscentia inflammat (antiquus serpens). . . . Deinde eam aucto crucis signo benedicens, ab omni mox tentatione liberam dimisit. . . . Casto deinceps amore, magnaque reverentia coluit, ipsa tandem sanctitate celebris." — O'Donnell, lib. ii. c. 25.

But it was towards another race, very different from his Scotic countrymen and much less accessible, that Columba felt himself drawn as much by the penance imposed upon him as by the necessities of the Church and of Christendom. While the Irish Scots occupied the islands and part of the western coast of Caledonia, all the north and east — that is to say, by far the greater part of the country — was inhabited by the Picts, who were still heathens. Originally from Sarmatia, according to Tacitus — according to Bede, descendants of the Scythians — these primitive inhabitants of Great Britain, who had remained untouched by Roman or Christian influences, owed their name to their custom of fighting naked, and of painting their bodies in various colors, which had been the wont of all the ancient Britons at the time of Cæsar's invasion. We have already seen that the holy bishop Ninian more than a century before had preached the Christian faith to the Southern Picts[112] — that is to say, to those who lived on the banks of the Forth or scattered among the Britons in the districts south of that river. But while even the traces of Ninian's apostolic work seemed at that moment effaced, although destined afterwards to reappear, the great majority of the Picts — those who inhabited the vast tracts to the north of the Grampians, into which no missionary before Columba had ever dared to penetrate[113] — had always continued heathen. The thirty-four years of life which Columba had still before him were chiefly spent in missions, undertaken for the purpose of carrying the faith to the hilly straths, and into the deep glens and numerous islands of northern Caledonia. There dwelt a race, warlike, grasping, and bold, as inaccessible to softness as to fear, only half clothed notwithstanding the severity of the climate, and obstinately attached to their customs, belief, and chiefs. The missionary had to preach, to convert, and even at need to brave those formidable tribes, in whom Tacitus recognized the farthest off of the earth's inhabitants, and the last champions of freedom — "*terrarum ac libertatis extremos;*" those barbarians who, having gloriously resisted Agricola, drove the frightened Romans from Britain, and devastated and desolated the entire island up to the arrival of the Saxons; and

Columba becomes the missionary of the Northern Picts. 555-575.

The Picts.

[112] Book viii. chap. 1.

[113] "Primus doctor fidei Christianæ transmontanis Pictis ad Aquilonem." — BEDE, v. 9. "Gentem illam verbo et exemplo ad fidem Christi convertit." — *Ibid.*, iii. 4.

whose descendants, after filling the history of Scotland with their feats of arms, have given, under the name of *Highlanders*, to the fallen Stuarts their most dauntless defenders, and to modern England her most glorious soldiers.

Columba crossed again and again that central mountain range in which rise those waters which flow, some north and west to fall into the Atlantic Ocean, and some to the south to swell the North Sea — a range which the biographer of the saint calls the backbone of Britain (*dorsum Britanniæ*), and which separates the counties of Inverness and Argyll, as now existing, from the county of Perth, and includes the districts so well known to travellers under the names of Breadalbane, Athol, and the Grampians. This was the recognized boundary between the Scots and Picts,[114] and it was here that the ancestors of the latter, the heroic soldiers of Galgacus, had held their ground against the father-in-law of Tacitus, who even when victorious did not venture to cross that barrier.[115] Often, too, Columba followed the course of that long valley of waters which, to the north of these mountains, traverses Scotland diagonally from the south-west, near Iona, to the north-east beyond Inverness. This valley is formed by a series of long gulfs and of inland lakes which modern industry has linked together, making it possible for boats to pass from one sea to the other without making the long round by the Orcadian Isles. Thirteen centuries ago religion alone could undertake the conquest of those wild and picturesque regions, which a scanty but fierce and suspicious population disputed with the fir-forests and vast tracts of fern and heather, which are still to be encountered there.

The first glance thrown by history upon this watery highway discovers there the preaching and miracles of Columba. He was the first to traverse in his little skiff Loch Ness and the river which issues from it; he penetrated thus, after a long and painful journey, to the principal fortress of the Pictish king, the site of which is still shown upon a rock north

[114] Such at least is the assertion of Adamnan, ii. 46. But his contemporary Bede and all modern authors give another frontier. According to the latter, the Scots extended through all the west of the Caledonian peninsula, and the Southern Picts occupied, to the south of the Grampians, the counties of Perth, Forfar, and Fife. See the map of Scotland in the eleventh century, in the *Sketches of Early Scotch History*, by Cosmo Innes. "Prædicaturas verbum Dei provinciis septentrionalium Pictorum, hoc est, eis quæ arduis atque horrentibus montium jugis ab australibus eorum sunt regionibus sequestratæ." — Bede, iii. 4.

[115] Walter Scott, *History of Scotland*, c. 1.

of the town of Inverness. This powerful and redoubtable monarch, whose name was Bruidh or Brude, son of Malcolm, gave at first a very inhospitable reception to the Irish missionary. The companions of the saint relate that, priding himself upon the royal magnificence of his fortress, he gave orders that the gates should not be opened to the unwelcome visitor: but this was not a command to alarm Columba. He went up to the gateway, made the sign of the cross upon the two gates, and then knocked with his hand. Immediately the bars and bolts drew back, the gates rolled upon their hinges and were thrown wide open, and Columba entered like a conqueror. The king, though surrounded by his council, among whom no doubt were his heathen priests, was struck with panic; he hastened to meet the missionary, addressed to him pacific and encouraging words, and from that moment gave him every honor.[116] It is not recorded whether Bruidh himself became a Christian, but during all the rest of his life he remained the friend and protector of Columba. He confirmed to him the possession of Iona, the sovereignty of which he seems to have disputed with his rival the king of the Dalriadian Scots, and our exile thus saw his establishment placed under the double protection of the two powers which shared Caledonia between them.[117]

He overcomes the resistance of King Bruidh.

But the favor of the king did not bring with it that of the heathen priests, who are indicated by the Christian historians under the name of Druids or Magi, and who made an energetic and persevering resistance to the new apostle. These priests do not seem either to have taught or practised the worship of idols, but

Struggles with the Druids in their last refuge.

[116] "Bridio rege potentissimo." — Bede, iii. 4. "In prima sancti fatigatione itineris ad regem Brudeum . . . ex fastu elatus regio munitionis suæ superbe agens . . . homo Dei, cum comitibus, ad valvas portarum accedens . . . tunc manum pulsans contra ostia, quæ continuo sponte, retro retrusis fortiter seris, cum omni celeritate aperta sunt. Rex cum senatu valde per timescunt." — Adamn., i. c. 35. It is supposed that this royal fortress occupied the site of the vitrified fort of *Craig Pharrick*, on a rock 1200 feet above the Ness, near its embouchure into the Moray Firth. These *vitrified* walls — that is to say, walls the stones of which have been dipped, instead of cement, into a vitreous substance produced by the action of fire — are to be found in some districts of Brittany and of Maine, and are everywhere imputed to the Celtic period.

[117] "Quæ videlicet insula ad jus quidem Britanniæ pertinet, sed donatione Pictorum qui illas Britanniæ plagas incolunt, jamdudum monachis Scotorum tradita, eo quod illis prædicantibus fidem Christi perceperint. . . . Unde et Columba . . . præfatam insulam ab eis in possessionem monasterii faciendi accepit." — Bede, iii. 3, 4. Compare Reeves, p. 76.

rather that of natural forces, and especially of the sun and other celestial bodies. They followed or met the Irish preacher in his apostolic journeys, less to refute his arguments than to hold back and intimidate those whom his preaching gained to Christ. The religious and supernatural character which was attributed by the Druids of Gaul to the woods and ancient trees, was attached by those of Caledonia to the streams and fountains, some of which were, according to their belief, salutary and beneficial, while others were deadly to man. Columba made special efforts to forbid among the new Christians the worship of sacred fountains, and, braving the threats of the Druids, drank in their presence the water which they affirmed would kill any man who dared to put it to his lips.[118] But they used no actual violence against the stranger whom their prince had taken under his protection. One day, when Columba and his monks came out of the enclosure of the fort in which the king resided, to chant vespers according to the monastic custom, the Druids attempted to prevent them from singing, lest the sound of the religious chants should reach the people; but the abbot instantly intoned the sixty-fourth psalm, "*Eructavit cor meum verbum bonum: dico opera mea regi*," with so formidable a voice, that he reduced his adversaries to silence, and made the surrounding spectators, and even the king himself, tremble before him.[119]

He preaches by an interpreter.

But he did not confine himself to chanting in Latin; he preached. The dialect of the Picts, however, being different from that of the Scots, and unknown to him, it was necessary to employ the services of an interpreter.[120] But his words were not the less efficacious on this account, though everywhere he was met by the rival exhortations or derisions of the pagan priests. His impassioned nature, as ready to love as to hate, made itself as apparent in his apostolic preachings as formerly in the

[118] Adamnan, ii 2.

[119] "Dum cum paucis fratribus extra regis munitionem vespertinales Dei laudes ex more celebraret, quidam Magi."

[120] "Verbum vitæ per interpretatorem sancto prædicante viro." — Adamn., ii. 32. Bede states that there were five different languages spoken in Great Britain, and compares them with the five books of the Pentateuch. "Anglorum videlicet" (that is to say, the Anglo-Saxons), "Britonum, Scottorum, Pictorum et Latinorum quæ meditatione Scripturarum cæteris omnibus est facta communis." — *Hist. Eccl.*, i. 1. The text, which is so important for the history of philology, is not less important as a proof to what point the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures had already spread among the Catholic nations.

struggles of his youth; and ties of tender intimacy, active and never appealed to in vain, were soon formed between himself and his converts. One of the Picts, who, having heard him preach by his interpreter, was converted with his wife and all his family, became his friend, and received many visits from him. One of the sons of this new convert fell dangerously ill; the Druids profited by the misfortune to reproach the anxious parents, making it appear that the sickness of their child was the punishment of their apostasy, and boasting the power of the ancient gods of the country, as superior to that of the Christian's God. Columba having been informed hastened to his friend's aid: when he arrived the child had just expired. As soon as he had done all that in him lay to console the father and mother, he asked to be allowed to enter alone into the place where the body of the child was. There he knelt down and prayed long, bathed in tears; then rising, he said, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, return to life and arise!" At the same moment the soul came back to the child's body. Columba helped him to rise, supported him, led him out of the cabin, and restored him to his parents. The power of prayer was thus as great, says Adamnan, in our saint as in Elijah and Elisha under the old law, or in St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. John under the new.[121]

His respect for natural virtue.

While thus preaching faith and the grace of God by the voice of an interpreter, he at the same time recognized, admired, and proclaimed among those savage tribes the lights and virtues of the law of nature. He discovered the rays of its radiance in many an unknown hearer, by the help of that supernatural gift which enabled him to read the secrets of the heart, and to penetrate the darkness of the future; a gift which developed itself more and more in him as his apostolic career went on. One day while laboring in his evangelical work in the principal island of the Hebrides, the one which lies nearest to the main land,[122] he cried out all at once, "My sons, to-day you

[121] "Quidam plebeius" (this term is always used by Adamnan to express a layman, but at the same time a man either rich or of consideration). . . . "Magi parentibus sæpe cum magna exprobratione cœperunt illudere, suosque quasi fortiores magnificare deos, Christianorum Deo quasi infirmiori derogare. . . . Hoc noster Columba cum Elia et Eliseo. . . . Petro et Paulo et Joanni . . . habebat sibi commune virtutis miraculum." — ADAMNAN, ii. 32.

[122] Skye, the same in which Charles-Edward took refuge in 1746, after the defeat of Culloden, and where he met Flora Macdonald.

Baptism of the old Pictish chief in the isle of Skye.

will see an ancient Pictish chief, who has kept faithfully all his life the precepts of the natural law, arrive in this island; he comes to be baptized and to die." Immediately after, a boat was seen to approach the shore with a feeble old man seated in the prow, who was recognized as the chief of one of the neighboring tribes. Two of his companions took him up in their arms and brought him before the missionary, to whose words, as repeated by the interpreter, he listened attentively. When the discourse was ended the old man asked to be baptized; and immediately after breathed his last breath, and was buried in the very spot where he had just been brought to shore.[123]

At a later date, in one of his last missions, when, himself an old man, he travelled along the banks of Loch Ness, always in the district to the north of the mountain range of the *dorsum Britanniæ*, he said to the disciples who accompanied him, "Let us make haste and meet the angels who have come down from heaven, and who wait for us beside a Pict who has done well according to the natural law during his whole life to extreme old age: we must baptize him before he dies." Then hastening his steps and outstripping his disciples, as much as was possible at his great age, he reached a retired valley, now called Glen Urquhart, where he found the old man who awaited him. Here there was no longer any need of an interpreter, which makes it probable that Columba in his old age had learned the Pictish dialect. The old Pict heard him preach, was baptized, and with joyful serenity gave up to God the soul which was awaited by those angels whom Columba saw.[124]

And in Glen Urquhart.

His humanity.

In this generous heart humanity claimed its rights no less than justice. It was in the name of humanity,[125] his biographer expressly tells us, that he begged the freedom of a young female slave, born in Ireland, and the

[123] "O filii, hodie in hac terrula quidam gentilis senex naturale per totam bonum custodiens vitam, et baptizabitur et morietur. . . . Navicula cujus in prora advectus est decrepitus senex Geonæ primarius cohortis, quem bini juvenes de navi sublevantes, ante beati conspectum viri deponunt. . . . Verbo Dei a sancto per interpretem recepto. . . ." — ADAMNAN, i. 33.

[124] "Ultra Britanniæ dorsum iter agens. . . . Properemus sanctis obviam angelis qui de cœlis ad præferendam alicujus gentilici animam emissi nos illuc expectant, ut ipsum naturale bonum per totam vitam usque ad extremam senectutem conservantem, priusquam moriatur, opportune baptizemus. . . . Sanctus senex in quantum potuit comites festinus præcedebat . . . et credens baptizatus est et continuo lætus et securus, cum angelis observantibus ad Deum commigravit." — ADAMNAN, iii. 14.

[125] "Scoticam postulavit servam . . . humanitatis miseratione liberandam." — *Ibid.*, ii. 33.

captive of one of the principal Druids or Magi. This Druid was named Broïchan, and lived with the king, whose foster-father [126] he was, a tie of singular force and authority among the Celtic nations. Either from a savage pride, or out of enmity to the new religion, the Druid obstinately and cruelly refused the prayer of Columba. "Be it so," said the apostle; "but learn, Broïchan, that if thou refusest to set free this foreign captive, thou shalt die before I leave the province." When he had said this he left the castle, directing his steps towards that river Ness which appears so often in his history. But he was soon overtaken by two horsemen who came from the king to tell him that Broïchan, the victim of an accident, was dying, and fully disposed to set the young Irish girl free. The saint took up from the river bank a pebble, which he blessed, and gave to two of his monks, with the assurance that the sick man would be healed by drinking water in which this stone had been steeped, but only on the express condition that the captive should be delivered. She was immediately put under the charge of Columba's companions, and was thus restored at the same moment to her country and her freedom.[127]

The Druid, though healed, was not thereby rendered less hostile to the apostle. Like the magicians of Pharaoh, he attempted to raise nature and her forces against the new Moses. On the day fixed for his departure, Columba found, on reaching, followed by a numerous crowd, the banks of the long and narrow lake from which the Ness issues, and by which he meant to travel, a strong contrary wind and thick fog, as Broïchan had threatened, which the Druids exulted to see. But Columba, entering his boat, bade the frightened

[126] The reciprocal duties of foster fathers and children (fosterage) were minutely regulated by the British laws. In the twelfth century, Giraldus Cambrensis still remarked that among the Irish foster brothers and sisters were united by a tie almost stronger and more tender than brothers and sisters of the same blood. Dr. Lynch, in his *Cambrensis Eversus* (first published in 1662, and re-edited by Prof. Kelly in 1850), enlarges upon the importance of the tie which united the Irish princes and lords to their foster fathers and brothers. He recalls Mordecai, the foster-father of Esther, and Clitus, the foster-brother of Alexander the Great, among many examples of sacred and profane history which support his idea. His new editor asserts (ii. 141, 162) that at the Council of Trent the Irish bishop of Raphoe, Donald MacCongal, demonstrated that *fosterage* and *gossipred* (cognato spiritualis) were the principal safeguard of the public peace in Ireland.

[127] "Scito, Broichane, scito quia si mihi hanc peregrinam liberare captivam nolueris, priusquam de hac revertar provincia, citius morieris. . . . Nunc formidabiliter correptus ancillulam liberare est paratus . . . eademque hora liberata famula sancti legatis viri assignatur." — ADAMNAN, ii. 33.

rowers set the sail against the wind, and the assembled people saw him proceed rapidly on his course, as if borne by favorable breezes, towards the south end of the lake, by which he returned to Iona. But he left only to make a speedy return, and came so often as to accomplish the conversion of the Pictish nation, by destroying forever the authority of the Druids in this last refuge of Celtic paganism.[128] This sanguinary and untamable race was finally conquered by the Irish missionary. Before he ended his glorious career he had sown their forests, their defiles, their inaccessible mountains, their savage moors, and scarcely inhabited islands, with churches and monasteries.

He completes in his life the conversion of the Picts.

His fellow-workers.

Columba's assistants, in his numerous missions among the Picts, were the monks who had come with him, or who had followed him from Ireland. The fame of the obscure benefactors and civilizers of so distant a region has still more completely disappeared than that of Columba: it is with difficulty that some lingering trace of them is to be disentangled from the traditions of some churches whose sites may yet be found upon the ancient maps of Scotland. Such was Malruve (642–722),[129] a kinsman of Columba, and like him descended from the royal race of Niall, but educated in the great Monastery of Bangor, which he left to follow his illustrious cousin into Albyn, passing by Iona. He must have long survived Columba, for he was for fifty-one years abbot of a community at Apercrossan,[130] upon the north-west coast of Caledonia, opposite the large island of Skye, before he met his death, which was, according to local tradition, by the sword of Norwegian pirates.

Upon the opposite shore, in that striking promontory which forms the eastern extremity of Scotland, a district now known as Buchan, various churches trace their origin to Columba, and to one of his Irish disciples called Drostan. The *mormae.*· or chief of the country had at first refused them his permission to settle there, but his son fell dangerously ill,

[128] "Ventum tibi contrarium caliginemque umbrosam superinducam. . . . Christum invocat, cymbulamque ascendens nautis hæsitantibus, ipse constanter factus velum contra ventum jubet subrigi . . . omnique inspectante turba, navigium flatus contra adversos mira occurrit velocitate." — Adamnan, ii. 34. The place where he landed is at present occupied by Fort Augustus, at the commencement of the Caledonian Canal.

[129] W. Reeves, *St. Maelrubha, his History and Churches.* Edinburgh, 1861. Compare *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. vi. August, p. 132.

[130] At present Applecross. Twenty-one parishes in the north of Scotland were in primitive times dedicated to this saint.

and he hastened after the missionaries, offering them the land necessary for their foundation, and begging them to pray for the dying boy. They prayed, and the child was saved. After having blessed the new church, and predicted that none who profaned it should ever conquer their enemies or enjoy long life, Columba installed his companions in their new home, and himself turned to continue his journey. When Drostan saw himself thus condemned to live at a distance from his master, he could not restrain his tears; for these old saints, in their wild and laborious career, loved each other with a passionate tenderness, which is certainly not the least touching feature in their character, and which places an inextinguishable light upon their heads amid the darkness of the legends. "Then," Columba said, "let us call this place the Monastery of Tears;" [131] and the great abbey which lasted a thousand years upon that spot always retained the name. "He who sows in tears shall reap in joy."

The Monastery of Tears.

[131] Said Columb-Cille: "Let *Déar* (Tear) be its name henceforward." This incident is found in the Celtic language in the most ancient manuscript which exists relative to Scotland; it has been recently discovered in Cambridge, and is of the ninth century. It is about to be published under the name of the *Book of Deir*. Cosmo Innes, *Scotland in the Middle Ages*, p. 325. Whitley Stokes, *Saturday Review*, 8th December, 1860. The Monastery of Deir was rebuilt for the Cistercians by the Earl of Buchan in 1213. The prophecy of Columba was verified in the family of the Earl Marischal, head of the great house of Keith, who was, after the Reformation, the first spoliator of the monastery, which had been given to him by James VI. In vain his wife, a daughter of Lord Home, begged him not to accept the sacrilegious gift. He would not listen to her. The following night she saw in a dream a multitude of monks, clothed like those of Deir, surround the principal castle of the Earl, Dunnotter-Craig, which was situated on an immense rock on the coast. They began to demolish the rock with no other tools than *penknives:* at this sight the Countess hastened to look for her husband, that he might stop their work of destruction; but when she returned the rock and the castle had already been undermined and overthrown by the penknives of the monks, and nothing was to be seen but the fragments of the furniture floating on the sea. This vision was immediately interpreted as the announcement of a future catastrophe, and the use of penknives as a sign of the length of time which should pass before its fulfilment. From that moment this powerful house began to diminish, and finally fell in 1715 in the Stuart rebellion.

CHAPTER IV.

COLUMBA CONSECRATES THE KING OF THE SCOTS. — HE GOES TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF IRELAND, DEFENDS THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE HIBERNO-SCOTIC COLONY, AND SAVES THE CORPORATION OF BARDS.

Passionate solicitude of Columba for his relatives and countrymen. — He protects King Aidan in his struggle with the Anglo-Saxons of Northumbria. — The same king is crowned by Columba at Iona; the first example of a Christian consecration of kings. — The Stone of Destiny: the descendants of Aidan. — Synod or parliament of Drumceitt in Ireland. — Aedh, king of Ireland, and Aidan, king of the Irish colonists in Scotland. — The independence of the new Scottish kingdom is recognized through the influence of Columba. — He interposes in favor of the bards, whom the king had proposed to outlaw. — Power and excesses of that corporation. — By means of Columba, the good grain is not burned with the weeds. — The bards' song of gratitude in honor of their savior. — Columba, reproved by his disciple, desires that this song should not be repeated during his life. — Superstitious regard attached to it after his death. — Intimate union between music, poetry, and religion in Ireland. — The bards, transformed into minstrels, are the first champions of national independence and Catholic faith against the English conquest. — Fiercely assailed, they yet continue to exist up to our own day. — Moore's *Irish Melodies*. — The Celtic muse at the service of the vanquished in the Highlands of Scotland as in Ireland.

It would not, however, be natural to suppose that the mission of Columba among the Picts could entirely absorb his life and soul. That faithful love for his race and country which had moved him with compassion for the young Irish girl in captivity among the Picts did not permit him to remain indifferent to the wars and revolutions which were at the bottom of all national life among the Irish Scots as well as the Irish colony in Scotland. There was not a more marked feature in his character than his constant solicitude, his compassionate sympathy, as well after as before his removal to Iona, for the bloody struggles in which his companions and relatives in Ireland were so often engaged. Nothing was nearer to his heart than the claim of kindred; for that reason alone he occupied himself without cease with the affairs of individual relatives. "This man," he said to himself, "is of my

Anxious solicitude of Columba for his relatives and countrymen.

race; I must help him. It is my duty to pray for him, because he is of the same stock as myself. This other is of kin to my mother," &c. And then he would add, "My friends and kindred, who are descended like me from the Nialls, see how they fight!"[132] And from the far distance of his desert isle he fought with them in heart and thought, as of old he had aided them in person. He breathed from afar the air of battle; he divined the issue by what his companions considered a prophetic instinct, and told it to his monks, to his Irish countrymen, and to the Caledonian Scots who sought him in his new dwelling. With better reason still his soul kindled within him when he foresaw any struggle in which his new neighbors the Dalriadian colonists were to be engaged, either with the Picts, whom they were one day to conquer, or with the Anglo-Saxons.

The bell of Iona rings for the battle between the Scots and their enemies.

One day towards the end of his life, being alone with Diarmid his minister (as the monk attached to his personal service was called), he cried out all at once, "The bell! let the bell be rung instantly!" The bell of the modest monastery was nothing better than one of the little square bells made of beaten iron, which are still shown in Irish museums, exactly similar to those which are worn by the cattle in Spain and the Jura. It was enough for the necessities of the little insular community. At its sound the monks hastened to throw themselves on their knees around their father. "Now," said he, "let us pray — let us pray with intense fervor for our people, and for King Aïdan; for at this very moment the battle has begun between them and the barbarians." When their prayers had lasted some time, he said, "Behold, the barbarians flee! Aïdan is victorious!"[133]

The barbarians, against whom Columba rang his bells and called for the prayers of his monks, were the Anglo-Saxons

[132] "Quia est mihi cognationalis, et ex meæ matris parentela. . . . Mei cognationales amici. . . . Nellis nepotes." — ADAMN., ii. 40; i. 49; i. 7.

[133] "Subito ad suum dicit ministratorem Diormitium, *Cioccam pulsa*. . . . Nunc intente pro hoc populo et Aidano rege oremus; hac cum hora incipiunt bellum. . . . Nunc barbari in fugam vertuntur, Aidanoque quanquam infelix concessa victoria." — ADAMN., i. 8. This *quanquam infelix* refers to the fact that in this battle, *de bello Miathorum* (as this chapter of Adamnan is entitled), the king lost three hundred and three men and two of his sons. His third son also fell in battle against the Saxons: "In Saxonia Celtica in strage." — *Ibid.*, c. 9. Adamnan speaks of the war as *de bello Miathorum*, but he does not explain if these *Miathi*, or *Mœatæ*, who are always associated with the Caledonians, were the allies or the enemies of the Dalriadian Scots.

of Northumbria, who were still pagans, and whose descendants were destined to owe the inestimable blessings of Christianity to the monks of Iona and the spiritual posterity of Columba. But at that time the invaders thought only of taking a terrible revenge for the evils which Britain, before they conquered it, had endured from Scoto-Pictish incursions, and of extending their power ever farther and farther on the Caledonian side. As for King Aïdan,[134] he had replaced his cousin-german, King Connall, who had guaranteed to Columba the possession of Iona, as chief of the Dalriadian colony in Argyll. His accession to the throne took place in 574, eleven years after the arrival of Columba; and nothing proves more fully the influence acquired by the Irish missionary during this short interval than Aïdan's resolution to have his coronation blessed by the Abbot of Iona. Columba, though his friend, did not wish him to be king, preferring his brother; but an angel appeared to him three times in succession, and commanded him to consecrate Aïdan according to the ceremony prescribed in a book covered with crystal which was left with him for that purpose.[135] Columba, who was then in a neighboring island, went back to Iona, where he was met by the new king. The abbot, obedient to the celestial vision, laid his hands upon the head of Aïdan, blessed him, and ordained him king.[136] He inaugurated thus not only a new kingdom, but a new rite, which became at a later date the most august solemnity of Christian national life. The coronation of Aïdan is the first authentic instance known in the West. Columba thus assumed, in respect to the Scotic or Dalriadian kingdom, the same authority with which the abbots of Armagh, successors of St. Patrick, were already invested in respect to the kings of Ireland. That this supreme authority and these august functions were conferred upon abbots instead of bishops, has been the cause of much surprise. But at that period of the ecclesiastical history of

Aïdan, king of the Caledonian Scots, 574.

Consecrated by Columba.

[134] "Ædan, rex Scottorum qui Britanniam inhabitant." — Bede, i. 34.

[135] "Qui in manu vitreum ordinationis regum habebat librum." — Adamn., iii. 5. This is the famous *Vitreus Codex* which, according to a narrative given by Reeves, was only shown to Columba by the angel, and did not remain in his hands.

[136] "Aidanum, iisdem adventantibus diebus, regem, sicut erat jussus, ordinavit . . . imponensque manum super caput ejus, ordinans benedixit." — Martene (*De Antiquis Ritibus Ecclesiæ*, vol. iii. l. ii. c. 10, in the treatise *De Solemni Regum Benedictione*) says that the consecration of Aïdan is the first known example of that solemnity.

Celtic nations the episcopate was entirely in the shade; the abbots and monks alone appear to have been great and influential, and the successors of St. Columba long retained this singular supremacy over the bishops.

The Stone of Fate.

According to Scotch national tradition, the new king Aïdan was consecrated by Columba upon a great stone called the Stone of Fate. This stone was afterwards transferred to Dunstaffnage Castle, the ruins of which may be seen upon the coast of Argyll, not far from Iona; then to the Abbey of Scone, near Perth; and was finally carried away by Edward I., the cruel conqueror of Scotland, to Westminster, where it still serves as a pedestal for the throne of the kings of England on the day of their coronation. The solemn inauguration of the kingdom of Aïdan marks the historical beginning of the Scotch monarchy, which before that period was more or less fabulous. Aïdan was the first prince of the Scots who passed from the rank of territorial chief to that of independent king, and head of a dynasty whose descendants were one day to reign over the three kingdoms of Great Britain.[137]

But to secure the independence of the new Scottish royalty, or rather of the young nation whose stormy and poetic history was thus budding under the breath and blessing of Columba, it was necessary to break the link of subjugation or vassalage which bound the Dalriadian colony to the Irish kings. All this time it had remained tributary to the monarchs of the island which it had left nearly a century before to establish itself in Caledonia. To obtain by peaceable means the abolition of this tribute, Columba — who was Irish by heart as well as by birth, yet who at the same time was, like the Dalriadians, his kinsmen, an emigrant in Caledonia, and, like the new king, descended from the monarchs of

[137] Aïdan married a British wife, a daughter of those Britons who occupied the banks of the Clyde, and were neighbors of the Scots. With them for his allies, he made war vigorously, though unfortunately, as will be afterwards seen, upon the Anglo-Saxons. He survived Columba, and died in 606, after a reign of thirty-two years. His direct descendants reigned up to 689. They were then replaced by the house of Lorn, another branch of the first Dalriadian colony, whose most illustrious prince, Kenneth Macalpine, reduced the Picts to recognize him as their king in 842. The famous Macbeth and his conqueror Malcolm Canmore, the husband of St. Margaret, were both descended from Aïdan, or of the lineage of Fergus. The male line of these Scottish kings of Celtic race ended only with Alexander III. in 1283. The dynasties of Bruce and Stuart were of the female line. According to local and domestic traditions, the great modern clans of Macquarie, Mackinnon, Mackenzie, Mackintosh, MacGregor, Maclean, Macnab, and Macnaughten are descended from the primitive Dalriadians.

Ireland — must have seemed the mediator indicated by nature. He accepted the mission, and returned to Ireland, which he had thought never to see again, in company with the king whom he had just crowned, to endeavor to come to an agreement with the Irish monarch and the other princes and chiefs assembled at Drumkeath. His impartiality was above all suspicion; for the very day of the coronation of Aïdan he had announced to him, in the name of God, that the prosperity of the new Scotic kingdom depended upon peace with Ireland, its cradle. In the midst of the ceremony he had said aloud to the king whom he had crowned, "Charge your sons, and let them charge their grandchildren, never to expose their kingdom to be lost by their fault. The moment that they attempt any fraudulent enterprise against my spiritual descendants here, or against my countrymem and kindred in Ireland, the hand of God will weigh heavily upon them, the heart of men will be raised against them, and the victory of their enemies will be assured."[138]

The king of Ireland, Diarmid, who was, like Columba, of the race of Niall, but of the Nialls of the North, and whom our saint had so violently resisted, had died immediately after the voluntary exile of Columba. He perished, as has been mentioned, by the hand of a prince called Black Aedh, chief of the Antrim Dalriadians, who remained in Ireland when a part of their clan emigrated to Scotland. Some time afterwards the supreme throne of Ireland fell to another Aedh, of the southern branch of the race of Niall, and consequently of the same stock as Columba.[139] He was also the

[138] "Inter ordinationis verba . . . prophetare cœpit dicens: Tu filiis commenda ut et ipsi filiis et nepotibus et posteris suis commendent ne per consilia mala eorum sceptrum regni hujus de manibus suis perdant. . . . In me et in posteros meos . . . aut adversus cognatos meos qui sunt in Hibernia." — ADAMN., iii. 5. Colgan, in remarking this passage in his preface, cannot refrain from returning sadly upon the atrocities committed in Ireland by the Scots and Britons of his time, under the last descendants of the Dalriadian dynasty, James I. and Charles I. "Unde moderni Scoto-Britanni, qui cognatos sancti Columbæ in Hibernia nostris diebus ferro et flamma infestant, e suis sedibus pellunt et in ore crudelis gladii mactant, debent prædictam vindictam ore veridico Dei prophetæ prædictam formidare, si inter posteros Aïdani regis velint numerari; si non, certe non minus metuenda sunt illa sacri eloquii oracula, quibus dicitur: Qui gladio perimit, gladio peribit." — *Trias Thaum.*, p. 320.

[139] The poet-historian, Thomas Moore, by a singular confusion, looks upon Aedh the Black, the murderer of King Diarmid, and Aedh, son of Aimmire, the king of the Drumkeath parliament, as the same person. — *History of Ireland*, pp. 254, 263, Paris edition. I spare the reader all the other Aedhs or Aïdus, who are to be found mixed up with the history of the age of Columba in the inextricable Irish genealogies. My learned friend, M. Foisset,

friend and benefactor of his emigrant cousin, to whom he had given before his exile the site of Derry,[140] the most important of his Irish foundations. The first synod or parliament of Aedh's reign had been convoked in a place called Drumceitt,[141] the *Whale's Back*, situated in his special patrimony, not far from the sea and the gulf of Lough Foyle, where Columba had embarked, and at the further end of which was his dear monastery of Derry. It was there that he returned with his royal client, the new king of the Caledonian Scots, whose confessor, or, as the Irish termed it, *friend of his soul*, he had become.[142] The two kings, Aedh and Aïdan, presided at this assembly, which sat for fourteen months, and the recollection of which has been preserved among the Irish people, the most faithful nation in the world, for more than a thousand years.

Aedh, king of Ireland, and Aïdan, king of the Irish in Scotland, at the synod of Drumkeath.

The Irish lords and clergy encamped under tents like soldiers during the entire duration of this parliament.[143] The most important question discussed among them was no doubt that of the tribute exacted from the king of the Dalriadians. It does not appear that the Irish king demanded tribute on account of the new kingdom founded by his ancient subjects, but rather on account of that part of Ireland itself, at present the county of Antrim, from whence the Dalriadian colonists had gone, and which was the hereditary patrimony of their new king.[144] This was precisely the position in which the Norman princes, who had become kings of England, while

like a zealous Burgundian as he is, has pointed out to me the resemblance between the name of Aedh, which occurs so often among the Irish princes and kings, and that of the Ædui, the first inhabitants of Burgundy. He thinks, with reason, that the Celts of Gaul, conquered by Cæsar, had also lived, like their brethren in Ireland and Scotland, in clans, and is persuaded that the Ædui of Bibracte signified originally the clan of the sons of Aedh.

[140] Lynch's *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. ii. c. 9, p. 16.

[141] *Dorsum Cetæ* in Latin, *Drum Ceitt* or *Ceat* in Irish, at present called Drumkeath, near Newtown Limavaddy, in the county of Londonderry.

[142] Irish MS. quoted by Reeves, p. lxxvi. note 4.

[143] "Condictum regum." — Adamnan. "Collectis totius regni optimatibus, universoque clero . . . ad instar militum per papiliones et tentoria turmatim dispersi." — O'Donnell, book iii. c. 2, 5. "Hiberniæ proceribus Drum-Keathian ad leges condendas cocuntibus et quatuordecim mensibus illic hærentibus." — Lynch, c. 9. Colgan, who lived in 1645, narrates that the site of the assembly then was still frequented by numerous pilgrims, and that a procession was formerly celebrated there on the day of All-Saints: "cum summo omnium vicinarum partium accursu." — *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, vol. i. p. 204. The site is still to be seen upon an elevation at Roe Park, near Newtown Limavaddy. — Reeves, p. 37.

[144] Moore's *History of Ireland*, vol. i. c. 12, p. 256.

still dukes of Normandy, found themselves, five centuries later, in respect to the kings of France. Columba, the friend of both kings, was commissioned to solve the difficulty. According to some Irish authors, the Abbot of Iona, when the decisive moment arrived, refused to decide, and transferred to another monk, St. Colman, the responsibility of pronouncing the judgment. At all events, the Irish king renounced all suzerainty over the king of the Dalriadians of *Albania*, as Scotland was then called. Independence and freedom from all tribute were granted to the Albanian Scots, who, on their side, promised perpetual alliance and hospitality to their Irish countrymen.[145]

The independence of the new kingdom recognized by the intervention of Columba.

Columba had another cause to plead at the parliament of Drumceitt, which was almost as dear to his heart as the independence of the Scotic kingdom and colony of which he was the spiritual head. The question in this case was nothing less than that of the existence of a corporation as powerful as, and more ancient and national than, the clergy itself: it concerned the bards, who were at once poets and genealogists, historians and musicians, and whose high position and popular ascendency form one of the most characteristic features of Irish history. The entire nation, always enamoured of its traditions, its fabulous antiquity, and local and domestic glory, surrounded with ardent and respectful sympathy the men who could clothe in a poetic dress all the lore and superstitions of the past, as well as the passions and interests of the present. In the annals of Ireland, as far back as they can be traced, the bards or *ollambh*, who were regarded as oracles of knowledge, of poetry, history, and music, are always to be found. They were trained from their infancy with the greatest care in special communities, and so greatly honored that the first place at the royal table, after that of the king himself, was reserved for them.[146] Since the introduction of Christianity, the bards, like the Druids of earlier times, whose successors they are supposed to have been, continued to form a powerful and popular band. They were then divided into three orders: the *Filéas*, who sang of religion and of war; the *Brehons*, whose name is associated with the ancient laws of the country, which they versified and recited;[147] the *Seanachies*, who en-

He interposes in favor of the bards.

Power and excesses of this corporation.

[145] Reeves, pp. lxxvi. and 92.

[146] Eugene O'Curry's *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Irish History*. Dublin, 1861.

[147] The code known under the name of *Laws of the Brehons* continued to

shrined in verse the national history and antiquities, and, above all, the genealogies and prerogatives of the ancient families who were specially dear to the national and warlike passions of the Irish people. They carried this guardianship of historical recollections and relics so far as to watch over the boundaries of each province and family domain.[148] They took part, like the clergy, in all the assemblies, and with still greater reason in all the fights. They were overwhelmed with favors and privileges by the kings and petty princes, on whom their songs and their harp could alone bestow a place in history, or even a good name among their contemporaries. But naturally this great power had produced many abuses, and at the moment of which we speak, the popularity of the bards had suffered an eclipse. A violent opposition had been raised against them. Their great number, their insolence, their insatiable greed, had all been made subjects of reproach; and, above all, they were censured for having made traffic and a trade of their poetry — of lavishing praises upon the nobles and princes who were liberal to them, and making others the subject of satirical invectives, which the charm of their verse spread but too readily, to the great injury of the honor of families. The enmities raised against them had come to such a point, that King Aedh felt himself in sufficient force to propose to the assembly of Drumceitt the radical abolition of this dangerous order, and the banishment, and even outlawry, if not, as some say, the massacre of all the bards.

Whom King Aedh proposes to proscribe.

It is not apparent that the clergy took any part whatever in this persecution of a body which they might well have regarded as their rivals. The introduction of Christianity into the country of Ossian, under St. Patrick, seems scarcely, if at all, to have affected the position of the bards. They became Christians without either inflicting or suffering any violence, and they were in general the auxiliaries and friends of the bishops, monks, and saints. Each monastery, like each prince and lord, possessed a bard, whose office it was to sing

regulate the civil life of the Irish even under the English conquest; it was only abolished under James I. at the beginning of the seventeenth century; it had lasted, according to the most moderate calculations, since the time of King Cormac, in 266 — that is to say, fourteen centuries.

[148] "Rei antiquariæ professores et poetas . . . quos tempore gentilismi Druidas, Vates, et Bardos . . . vocabant. . . . His ex officio incumbebat . . . familiarum nobilium et prærogativas studiose observare; regionum agrorumque metas ac limites notare ac distinguere." — O'Donnell, book iii. c. 2 and 7.

the glory, and often to write the annals, of the community.[149] Notwithstanding, it is apparent, through many of the legends of the period, that the bards represented a pagan power, in the eyes of many ecclesiastical writers, and that they were willingly identified with those Druids or Magi who had been the principal enemies of the evangelical mission of Patrick in Ireland and of Columba in Scotland.[150] Even in the legend of Columba[151] it is noted that some among them had determined to make him pay for his ransom according to their custom, and had for this end addressed to him importunate solicitations, threatening, if he refused, to abuse him in their verse.

Notwithstanding, it was Columba who saved them. He who was born a poet and remained a poet to the last day of his life, interceded for them, and gained their cause. His success was not without difficulty, for King Aedh was eager in their pursuit; but Columba, as stubborn as bold, made head against all. He represented that care must be taken not to pull up the good corn with the tares; that the general exile of the poets would be the death of a venerable antiquity and of that poetry which was so dear to the country and so useful to those who knew how to employ it.[152] The ripe corn must not be burned, he said, because of the weeds that mingle with it. The king and the assembly yielded at length, under condition that the number of bards should be henceforward limited, and that their profession should be put under certain rules determined by Columba himself. It was his eloquence alone which turned aside the blow by which they were threatened; and knowing themselves to be saved by him, they showed their gratitude by exalting his glory in their songs and by leaving to their successors the charge of continuing his praise.[153]

The good grain must not be burned with the weeds.

[149] Hersart de la Villemarqué, *La Poésie des Cloîtres Celtiques*, *Correspondant* du 25 Novembre, 1863.

[150] "Poetæ impudentes," says the legend of St. Colman, Boll. Act. SS. Junii, vol. ii. p. 27.

[151] "Cum aliquot vernaculæ seu Hibernicæ poeseos professores, quos bardos vocant, cum nihil tum ad manum habentem, non importune tantum, sed improbe divexassent, nescio quod donativum ab eo sub interminatione invectivi poematis contendentes." — O'Donnell, book i. c. 57.

[152] "Ne inter Antiquariorum vitia extirpanda, simul et interiret venerandæ antiquitatis studium. . . . Artem regno et recte usuris valde proficuam." — O'Donnell.

[153] All the authorities of Irish history, printed or in manuscript, confirm this tradition (see Reeves, p. 79, and Moore, p. 257). Adamnan alone

Columba himself had a profound pleasure in this poetical popularity. The corporation of bards had a chief, Dallan Forgall, who was blind, and whose violent death (he was murdered by pirates) has given him a place among the holy martyrs, of whom there are so few in Ireland. Immediately after the favorable decision of the assembly, Dallan composed a song in honor of Columba, and came to sing it before him. At the flattering sounds of this song of gratitude the Abbot of Iona could not defend himself from a human sentiment of self-satisfaction. But he was immediately reproved by one of his monks, Baithen, one of his twelve original companions in exile, and who was destined to be his successor. This faithful friend was not afraid to accuse Columba of pride, nor to tell him that he saw a sombre cloud of demons flying and playing round his head. Columba profited by the warning. He imposed silence upon Dallan,[154] reminding him that it was only the dead who should be praised, and absolutely forbade him to repeat his song.[155] Dallan obeyed reluctantly, and awaited the death of the saint to make known his poem, which became celebrated in Irish literature under the name of *Amhlra*, or the *Praise of St. Columbcille*. It was still sung a century after his death throughout all Ireland and Scotland, and even the least devout of men repeated it with tenderness and fervor, as a safeguard against the dangers of war and every other accident.[156] It even

Song of gratitude from the bards in honor of their savior.

Superstitious devotion with which this song was regarded.

says nothing of it; but he speaks of numerous songs in the Scotic language in honor of Columba, which circulated everywhere in Scotland and in Ireland.

[154] "Composuit patrio sermone rhythmum illum . . . qui in scholis Antiquariorum publice perlegi et scholiis ac commentariis exponi consuevit." — O'Donnell, book i. c. 6. This poem, which has been the subject of innumerable commentaries, still exists in MS., and is to be published with all the *Liber Hymnorum* by Dr. Todd. Colgan possessed a copy which seemed to him almost unintelligible: "Est penes me exemplar hujus operis egregie scriptum, sed seclusis tusis, quos habet annexos, commentariis, hodie paucis, iisque peritissimis, penetrabile." — *Ubi supra.*

[155] *Vita Sancti Dallani Martyris*, ap. Colgan, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, p. 204.

[156] "Ejusdem beati viri per quædam Scoticæ linguæ laudum ipsius carmina, et nominis commemorationem, quidam, quamlibet scelerati laicæ conversationis homines et sanguinarii, ea nocte qua eadem decantaverant cantica, de manibus inimicorum qui eamdem eorumdem cantorum domum circumsteterant, sunt liberati. . . . Pauci ex ipsis, qui easdem sancti viri commemorationes, quasi parvi pendentes, canere noluerant decantationes . . . soli disperierunt. Hujus miraculi testes . . . centeni et amplius. Hoc idem ut contigisse probatur non in uno loco aut tempore, sed diversis locis et temporibus in Scotia et Britannia, simili tamen modo et causa liberationis factum fuisse. Hæc ab expertis uniuscujusque regionis, ubicumque res

came to be believed that every one who knew this Amhhra by heart and sang it piously would die a good death. But when the unenlightened people came so far as to believe that even great sinners, without either conversion or penitence, had only to sing the Amhhra of Columbcille every day in order to be saved, a wonder happened, says the historian and grand-nephew of the saint, which opened the eyes of the faithful, by showing to them how they ought to understand the privileges accorded by God to his saints. An ecclesiastic of the metropolitan church of Armagh, who was a man of corrupt life, and desired to be saved without making any change in his conduct, succedeed in learning the half of the famous Amhhra, but never could remember the other half. It was in vain that he made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the saint, fasted, prayed, and spent the entire night in efforts to impress it upon his memory — the next morning he found that, though he had at length succeeded in learning the latter half, he had completely forgotten the first.[157]

The gratitude of the bards to him who had preserved them from exile and outlawry, has certainly had some share in the wonderful and lasting popularity of Columba's name. Shrined in the national and religious poetry of the two islands, his fame has not only lasted in full brilliancy in Ireland, but it has survived even the Reformation — which has destroyed almost all other traces of their past history as Christians — in the memory of the Celts of Scotland.

Intimate connection of poetry and music with religion in Ireland.

On the other hand, the protection of Columba certainly confirmed the popularity of the bards in the heart of the Irish nation. All opposition between the religious spirit and the bardic influence disappeared from his time. Music and poetry after that period identified themselves more and more with ecclesiastical life. Among the relics of the saints the harps on which they had played found a place. At the first English conquest, the bishops and abbots excited the surprise of the invaders by their love of music, and by accompanying themselves on the harp.[158] Irish poetry, which was in the days

eadem simili contigit miraculo, indubitanter didicimus." — Adamnan, i. 1. Let us add that the disciples of Columba continued to cultivate music and poetry after his death. A modern poet, James Hogg, has written some English verses, in themselves insignificant, to an old air which had been sung by the monks of Iona. — Whitelaw, *The Book of Scottish Song*. Glasgow, 1857.

[157] Vicomte de la Villemarqué, *Poésie des Cloîtres Celtiques*, after Colgan and O'Donnell, *ubi supra*.

[158] "Hinc accidit ut episcopi et abbates et sancti in Hibernia viri citharae

of Patrick and Columba so powerful and so popular, has long undergone in the country of Ossian the same fate as the religion of which these great saints were the apostles. Rooted like it in the heart of a conquered people, and like it proscribed and persecuted with unwearing vehemence, it has come ever forth anew from the bloody furrow in which it was supposed to be buried. The bards became the most powerful allies of patriotism, the most dauntless prophets of national independence, and also the favorite victims of the cruelty of spoilers and conquerors. They made music and poetry weapons and bulwarks against foreign oppression, and the oppressors used them as they had used the priests and the nobles. A price was set upon their heads. But while the last scions of the royal and noble races, decimated or ruined in Ireland, departed, to die out under a foreign sky amid the miseries of exile, the successor of the bards, the minstrel, whom nothing could tear from his native soil, was pursued, tracked, and taken like a wild beast, or chained and slaughtered like the most dangerous of rebels.

The bards, transformed into minstrels, are the chief champions of national independence and the Catholic faith.

In the annals of the atrocious legislation directed by the English against the Irish people, as well before[159] as after the Reformation, special penalties against the *minstrels, bards, rhymers*, and *genealogists*, who sustained the lords and gentlemen in their love of rebellion and of other crimes,[160] are to be met at every step. An attempt was made, under the sanguinary Elizabeth, to give pecuniary recompense to those who would celebrate "her Majesty's most worthy praise." The bargain was accepted by none. All preferred flight or death to this salary of lies. Wandering over hill and dale, hidden in the depths of the devastated country, they perpetuated there the poetic traditions of their condemned race, and sang the glory of ancient heroes and new martyrs, the shame of apostates, and the crimes of the sacrilegious stranger.

In order the better to brave tyranny in the midst of a subdued and silent people, they had recourse to allegory and the elegies of love. Under the figure of an enslaved queen — or

circumferre et in iis modulando pie delectari consueverint. . . . Sancti Kevini cithara ab indigenis in reverentia non modica et pro reliquiis virtuosis et magnis usque hodie habetur." — GIRALDUS, *Cambriæ Descriptio*, c. 12.

[159] For instance, at the parliament of Kilkenny under Edward I.

[160] These are the words of an act of the time of Elizabeth, quoted by Moore, p. 257.

of a woman loved with an everlasting love and fought for with despairing faithfulness, in face of the jealous fury of a step-mother — they celebrated again and again the Irish Fatherland, the country in mourning and tears, once queen and now a slave.[161] The Irish, says a great historian of our own day, loved to make of their country a real being whom they loved, and who loved them. They loved to address her without naming her name, and to identify the austere and perilous devotion which they had vowed to her with all that is sweetest and most fortunate in the affections of the heart, like those Spartans who crowned themselves with flowers when about to perish at Thermopylæ.[162]

Proscribed with vehemence.

Up to the time of the ungrateful Stuarts, this proscription of the national poets was permanent, increasing in force with every change of reign and every new parliament. The rage of the Cromwellian Protestants carried them so far as to break, wherever they met with them, the minstrel's harps[163] which were still to be found in the miserable cottages of the starving Irish, as they were eleven centuries before, at the time when the courageous and charitable Bridget saw them suspended on the wall of the king's palace.[164] Nevertheless the harp has remained the emblem of Ireland even in the official arms of the British empire; and during all last century the travelling harper, last and pitiful successor of the bards protected by Columba, was always to be found at the side of the priest to celebrate the holy mysteries of the proscribed worship. He never ceased to be received with tender respect under the thatched roof of the poor Irish peasant, whom he consoled in his misery and oppression by the plaintive tenderness and solemn sweetness of the music of his fathers.

They nevertheless lasted up to our own day.

The continuance of these distinctive features of Irish char-

[161] "Erin of the sorrows, once a queen, now a slave."

[162] Augustin Thierry. *Dix Ans d'Etudes Historiques.*

[163] "Efferati quidem excursores in obvias quasque lyras earum proscissione multis in locis immaniter sæviant." — Lynch. *Cambrensis Eversus*, book i. c. 4. p. 316. This author, who wrote in 1662, feels himself obliged to give a detailed description of the harp, lest the instrument should disappear in the general ruin of Ireland. "Quare operæ me pretium facturum existimo, si lyræ formam lectori ob oculos ponam, ne illius memoris gentis excidio . . . innexa obliteretur." Charles II., as soon as he was established on the throne, permitted the passing of an act of Parliament "against the vagabond minstrels, to repress their rhymes and scandalous songs."

[164] "Et vidit citharas in domo regis, et dixit: Citharizate nobis citharis vestris." — *Tertia Vita Sanctæ Brigitæ*, c. 75, p. 536, ap. Colgan.

acter through so many centuries is so striking, and the misfortunes of that noble race touch us so nearly, that it is difficult to resist the temptation of leaving behind us those distant ages, and of following through later generations the melancholy relics of all that has been discovered or admired in the most ancient days. We may be pardoned for adding that, if the text of those poetic and generously obstinate protests against the enslavement of Ireland have perished, the life and spirit of them has survived in the pure and penetrating beauty of the ancient Irish airs. Their harmonies and their refrains, which are inimitably natural, original, and pathetic, move the depths of the soul, and send a thrill through all the fibres of human sensibility. Thomas Moore, in adapting to them words which are marked with the impression of a passionate fidelity to the proscribed faith and oppressed country, has given to the *Irish Melodies* a popularity which was not the least powerful among those pleas which determined the great contest of Catholic Emancipation.

The Celtic muse at the service of the vanquished in Scotland as in Ireland.

The genius of Celtic poetry has, however, survived not only in Ireland, in the country of Columba and of Moore, but has found a refuge in the glens of the Scottish Highlands, among those vast moors and rugged mountains, and beside the deep and narrow lakes, which Columba, bearing the light of the faith to the Caledonian Picts, had so often traversed. In those districts where, as in a great part of Ireland, the Erse or Gaelic language is still spoken, the Celtic muse, always sad and always attached to the cause of the people, has been found in recent times, at the most prosaic moment of modern civilization, in the eighteenth century itself, inspiring the warlike songs and laments which the Highlanders have consecrated to the conquered Pretender and his followers slain. And if we may believe a competent and impartial judge,[165] the last effusions of the soul of the Gaelic race surpass, in plaintive beauty and in passionate feeling, even those delicious Anglo-Scottish songs which no traveller can hear without emotion, and which have assured the palm, at least of poetry, to the cause of the Stuarts, which has been so sadly represented by its princes, and so ill served by events, but which the popular and national muse has thus avenged, even for the irremediable defeat of Culloden.

[165] Charles Mackay, *The Jacobite Songs and Ballads of Scotland from 1688 to 1746*, Introduction, p. 18.

CHAPTER V.

COLUMBA'S RELATIONS WITH IRELAND — CONTINUED.

Cordial intercourse of Columba with the Irish princes. — Prophecy upon the future of their sons. — Domnall, the king's son, obtains the privilege of dying in his bed. — Columba visits the Irish monasteries. — Popular enthusiasm. — Vocation of the young idiot afterwards known as St. Ernan. — Solicitude of Columba for the distant monasteries and monks. — He protects them from excessive labors and accidents. — He exercises authority over laymen. — Baithen, his cousin-german and principal assistant. — The respect shown to both in an assembly of learned men.

Cordial intercourse between Columba and the Irish princes.

In the national parliament of Drumceitt which saved the bards, and where all the ecclesiastical chiefs of the Irish nation, along with their princes and provincial kings, were assembled, Columba, already invested by his apostolical labors with great power and authority, found himself surrounded by public homage, and tokens of universal confidence. To all the kings, whose kinsman and friend he was, he preached peace, concord, the pardon of affronts, and the recall of exiles, many of whom had found shelter in the island monastery which owed its existence to his own exile.[166] Nevertheless, it was not without trouble that he obtained from the supreme monarch the freedom of a young prince, named Scandlan, son of the chief of Ossory, whom Aedh detained in prison, in contempt of his sworn faith, and of an agreement to which Columba himself had been a witness. The noble abbot went to the prisoner in his dungeon, blessed him, and predicted to him that he should be twice exiled, but that he should survive his oppressor, and reign for thirty years in his paternal domain. The king yielded on this point, but with a bad grace; he feared the influence of the illustrious exile, and had seen him return to Ireland with dissatisfaction. His eldest son had publicly ridiculed the monks of Iona, and had thus drawn upon himself the curse of Columba, which brought misfortune, for he was afterwards dethroned and assassinated. But the king's second son Domnall, who was still young, took openly the part of the Abbot of Iona, who predicted for him not only a long and glorious

Prophecies of the future.

[166] Adamnan, i. 11, 13.

reign, but the rare privilege of dying in his bed, on the condition of receiving the Holy Communion every eight days, and of keeping at least one in seven of his promises[167] — a somewhat satirical limit, which betrays either the old contradictory spirit of the converted Niall, or the recollection of his own legitimate resentment against certain princes. His prophecy, extremely improbable as it was, in a country where all the princes perished on the battle-field or by a violent death, was nevertheless fulfilled. Domnall, who was the third successor of his father, following after two other kings who were destroyed by their enemies, had a long and prosperous reign; he gained numerous victories, marching to battle under a banner blessed by St. Columba, and died, after an illness of eighteen months, in his bed, or, as Columba specified, with a precision which marks the rareness of the occurrence, on his down-bed.[168] His father, although reconciled to Columba, did not escape the common law. The great abbot bestowed upon him his monastic cowl, promising that it should always be to him as an impenetrable cuirass. After this, he never went into battle without putting on his friend's cowl above his armor. But one day when he had forgotten it, he was killed in a combat with the King of Lagenia or Leinster.[169] Columba had previously warned him against waging war with the people of Leinster, which was the country of his mother, and which he loved with that impassioned clan or family affection which is so distinctive a feature in his character. The Lagenians had not lost the opportunity of working upon this sentiment; for one day, when he was at his Abbey of Durrow, upon their boundary, a numerous assembly of all ages, from children to old men, came to him, and, surrounding him, pleaded with such animation their kindred with his mother, that they obtained from him the promise, or prophecy, that no king should ever be able to overcome them, so long as they fought for a just cause.[170]

He visits his Irish monasteries.

There is no doubt that, after the assembly of Drumceitt, Columba made many journeys to Ireland. The direction of the various monasteries which he had founded there before his voluntary exile, and

[167] Irish MS. quoted by Reeves, p. 38.

[168] "Super plumatiunculam." — Adamnan, i. 15. Compare c. 10.

[169] Lynch, *Cambrensis Eversus*, with Kelly's notes, 17, 19. — O'Donnell, book i. c. 60.

[170] "Id prolixe afflicteque allegata cognatione flagitantes." — O'Donnell, *loc. cit.* Compare Reeves, p. 221.

of which he had kept the government in his own hands, must have led him often back; but after that assembly, his visits were always made notable by miracles of healing, prophecy, or revelation, and still more by the tender solicitude of his paternal heart. Sometimes, towards the decline of his life, while traversing a hilly or marshy country, he travelled in a car, as St. Patrick had done: but the care with which his biographers note this fact, proves that formerly the greater part of his journeys had been made on foot.[171] He did not limit himself to communities of which he was the superior or founder; he loved to visit other monastic sanctuaries also, such as that of Clonmacnoise, whose importance has already been pointed out.[172] And on such occasions the crowding and eagerness of the monks to pay their homage to the holy and beloved old man was redoubled; they left their out-door work, and, crossing the earthen intrenchment, which like the *vallum* of Roman camps, enclosed the Celtic monasteries, came to meet him, chanting hymns. When they came up to him, they prostrated themselves on the ground at his feet, ere they embraced him; and in order to shelter him from the crowd during the solemn processions which were made in his honor, a rampart of branches was carried like a dais by four men, who surrounded him, treading with equal steps.[173] An ancient author even goes so far as to say, that on the occasion of his return and prolonged stay in his native country, he was invested with a sort of general supremacy over all the religious of Ireland, both monks and nuns.[174]

Vocation of the pilot afterwards known as St. Ernan.

During the journey from Durrrow to Clonmacnoise, Columba made a halt at one of his own monasteries, where a poor little scholar, "of thick speech, and still more heavy aspect," whom his superiors employed in the meanest services, glided into the crowd, and stealthily approaching the great abbot, touched the end of his robe behind him, as the Canaanitish woman touched the robe of our Lord. Columba, perceiving it, stopped,

[171] "Per loca aspera et inaquosa. . . . Pergunt sic tota die per loca aspera, cœnosa et saxosa." — O'Donnell, book iii. c. 17. Compare Adamnan, ii. 43.

[172] See *ante*, p. 716.

[173] "Undique ab agellulis monasterio vicinis . . . congregati . . . egressi . . . valium monasterii, unanimes pergunt. . . . Quamdam de lignis pyramidem erga sanctum deambulantem constringentes . . . ne sanctus senior fratrum multitudinis constipatione molestaretur." — Adamnan, i. 3.

[174] *Vita S. Farannani Confessoris*, 15th February, c. 3. in Colgan. *Acta SS. Hiberniæ*, p. 377. This author, who wrote only in the thirteenth century, cannot be considered of great authority.

turned round, and, taking the child by the neck, kissed him. "Away, away, little fool!" cried all the spectators. "Patience, my brethren," said Columba: then turning to the boy, who trembled with fear, "My son," he said, "open thy mouth and show me thy tongue." The child obeyed, with increasing timidity. The abbot made the sign of the cross upon his tongue, and added, "This child, who appears to you so contemptible, let no one henceforward despise him. He shall grow every day in wisdom and virtue; he shall be reckoned with the greatest among you; God will give to this tongue, which I have just blessed, the gift of eloquence and true doctrine."[175] The boy grew to manhood, and became celebrated in the churches of Scotland and Ireland, where he was venerated under the name of St. Ernan. He himself told this prophecy, so well justified by the event, to a contemporary of Adamnan, who has preserved all the details for us.

Tender care of Columba for his distant monks and monasteries.

These journeys, however, were not necessary to prove Columba's solicitude for the monks who filled his monasteries. He showed the same care when distant as when at hand, by the help of that miraculous foresight which came to the assistance of his paternal anxiety in all their spiritual and temporal necessities. One day, after his return from Ireland, he was heard to stop suddenly short in the correspondence or transcription in which he had been engaged in his little cell in Iona, and cry with all his strength, "Help, help!" This cry was addressed to the guardian angel of the community, and the appeal was made on behalf of a man who had fallen from the top of the round tower which was then being built at Durrow, in the centre of Ireland — so great was his confidence in what he himself called the indescribable and lightning speed of the flight of angels; and greater still was his trust

[175] "Valde despectus vultu et habitu . . . cervicem pueri tenet, ipsumque trahens ante faciem suam statuit. Omnibus dicentibus. . . . Dimitte, dimitte, quare hunc infelicem et injuriosum retines puerum. . . . Sinite, fratres, hunc. . . . O fili, aperi os et porrige linguam . . . cum ingenti tremore. . . . In hac vestra congregatione grandis est futurus et lingua ejus salubri et doctrina et eloquentia a Deo donabitur. Hic erat eminens . . . postea per omnes Scotiæ ecclesias famosus et valde notissimus: qui hæc omnia supra scripta verba Segineo abbati de se prophetata enarravit, meo decessore Failbeo intentius audiente . . . cujus revelatione et ego ipse cognovi hæc eadem quæ enarravi." — Adamnan, i. 3. St. Ernan died in 635. M. de la Villemarqué has cited this incident in his *Légende Celtique*, as a type of the initiation of the children of barbarians into intellectual life by means of the monasteries.

in their protection.[176] Another time, at Iona, in a day of chilly fog, such as occurs often in that sombre climate, he was suddenly seen to burst into tears. When asked the reason of his distress, he answered, "Dear son, it is not without reason that I weep. At this very hour I see my dear monks of Durrow condemned by their abbot to exhaust themselves in this dreary weather building the great round tower of the monastery, and the sight overwhelms me." The same day, and at the same hour, as was afterwards ascertained, Laisran, the abbot of Durrow, felt within himself something like an internal flame, which reawakened in his heart a sentiment of pity for his monks. He immediately commanded them to leave their work, to warm themselves, and take some food, and even forbade them to resume their building until the weather had improved. This same Laisran afterwards came to deserve the name of Consoler of the Monks, so much had he been imbued by Columba with that supernatural charity which, in monastic life, as in every other Christian existence, is at once a light and a flame, *ardens et lucens*.[177]

Authority of Columba over the laymen.

Columba not only retained his superior jurisdiction over the monasteries which he had founded in Ireland, or which had been admitted to the privileges of his foundations, but he also exercised a spiritual authority, which it is difficult to explain, over various laymen of his native island. On one occasion, he is known to have sent his cousin, friend, and principal disciple to the centre of Ireland, to Drum-Cuill, to pronounce sentence of excommunication against a certain family, whose crime, however, is not specified. This disciple was Baithen, whom we have seen to be one of Columba's companions from the moment of his exile, and who warned his superior against the fumes

[176] "In tuguriolo suo scribens. . . . Auxiliare, auxiliare. . . . Duo fratres ad januam sancti . . . causam talis subtæ vocis interrogant. . . . Angelo qui nunc inter vos stabat, jussi. . . . Valde mirabilis et pene indicibilis est angelici violatus pernicitas, fulgure ut æstimo, celeritati paritas." — ADAMNAN, iii. 15.

[177] "Quanta animi teneritudine . . . et quam mirabili divinitus infusæ scientiæ dono . . . non secus ac si oculis præsentes essent, intuebatur." — O'DONNELL, ii. 65. "Quadam brumali et valde frigida die, magno molestatus mœrore, flevit. . . . Non immerito, filiole, ego hac in hora contristor, meos videns monachos quos Laisrannus nunc gravi fatigatos labore in alicujus majoris domus fabrica molestat . . . eodem momento horæ Laisrannus . . . quasi quadam pyra intrinsecus succensus." — ADAMNAN. i. 29. Compare book iii. c. 15 for a similar incident relating to the same Monastery of Durrow and its round tower. Abbot Laisran was a near relative of Columba, and became his third successor at Iona.

of pride, at the time when the bards began to express their enthusiastic gratitude. The gentle Baithen, when he had arrived at the appointed place, after having passed the whole night in prayer under an oak, said to his companions, "No, I will not excommunicate this family before making sure that it will not repent. I give it a year's respite, and during the year the fate of this tree shall be a warning to it." Some time after the tree was struck by lightning; but we are not informed if the family thus warned was brought to repentance.

Baithen, his principal fellow-worker.

Baithen was a man of tender soul, of whom we would fain speak at greater length, if it were not needful to circumscribe the wide and confused records of Celtic hagiography. Columba compared him to St. John the Evangelist; he said that his beloved disciple resembled him who was the beloved disciple of Christ, by his exquisite purity, his penetrating simplicity, and his love of perfection.[178] And Columba was not alone in doing justice to the man who, after having been his chief lieutenant in his work, was to become his first successor. One day in an assembly of learned monks, probably held in Ireland, Fintan, a very learned and very wise man,[179] and also one of the twelve companions of Columba's exile, was questioned upon the qualities of Baithen. "Know," he answered, "that there is no one on this side of the Alps who is equal to him in knowledge of the Scriptures, and in the greatness of his learning." "What!" said his questioners — "not even his master, Columba?" "I do not compare the disciple with the master," answered Fintan. "Columba is not to be compared with philosophers and learned men, but with patriarchs, prophets, and apostles. The Holy Ghost reigns in him; he has been cho-

Testimony to the character of both from an assembly of learned men.

[178] "Nolo hac vice hanc familiam excommunicare donec sciam an ad pœnitentiam convertatur, an non. . . . Dicebat quod . . . in innocentia sincerissima et in simplicitate prudentissima, et in disciplina rigoris perfectorum operum non dissimiles fuerunt." — Act. SS. Bolland., vol. ii. June, p. 238. Let us add what these *Acta* relate of his incessant fervor in prayer: "Cum iter aliquod faceret aut alioquin alloqueretur . . . manus suas sub vestimento suo ad orandum Deum menti alacri interim dirigebat. . . . Inter duas particulas ori appositas, simul inter duo sorbitiuncula . . . et quod difficilius est, tempore metendi cum manipulum in terra collectum portaret ad cervicem, alterna brachia ad cœlum extendens, Tonantem interpellabat." — *Ibid.*, p. 237.

[179] So much so, that the Bollandists suppose this Fintan, described as *filius Lappani* in the Acts of St. Baithen, to be the same as the Fintan, *filius Aidi*, of Adamnan, book ii. c. 32. Compare Reeves, p. 144.

sen by God for the good of all. He is a sage among all sages, a king among kings, an anchorite with anchorites, a monk of monks; and in order to bring himself to the level even of laymen, he knows how to be poor of heart among the poor;[180] thanks to the apostolic charity which inspires him, he can rejoice with the joyful, and weep with the unfortunate. And amid all the gifts which God's generosity has lavished on him, the true humility of Christ is so royally rooted in his soul, that it seems to have been born with him." It is added that all the learned hearers assented unanimously to this enthusiastic eulogium.

CHAPTER VI.

COLUMBA THE PROTECTOR OF SAILORS AND AGRICULTURISTS, THE FRIEND OF LAYMEN, AND THE AVENGER OF THE OPPRESSED.

His univeral solicitude and charity during all his missionary life. — The sailor-monks: seventy monks of Iona form the crew of the monastic fleet; their boats made of osiers covered with hides. — Their boldness at sea: the whirlpool of Corryvreckan. — Columba's prayer protects them against sea monsters. — Their love of solitude leads them into unknown seas, where they discover St. Kilda, Iceland, and the Faröe Isles. — Cormac in Orkney, and in the icy ocean. — Columba often accompanies them: his voyages among the Hebrides. — The wild boar of Skye. — He subdues tempests by his prayer: he invokes his friend St. Kenneth. — He is himself invoked during life, and after his death, as the arbiter of winds. — Filial complaints of the monks when their prayers are not granted. — The benefits which he conferred on the agricultural population disentangled from the maze of fables: Columba discovers fountains, regulates irrigations and fisheries, shows how to graft fruit trees, obtains early harvests, interferes to stop epidemics, cures diseases, and procures tools for the peasants. — His special solicitude for the monkish laborers: he blesses the milk when

[180] "Scitote quod nullus ultra Alpes compar illi in cognitione Scripturarum divinarum et in magnitudine scientiæ reperitur. , . . Numquid ille sapientior est quam sanctus Columba nutricius illius? Ille enim non tam sapientibus litteratis, sed patriarchis et prophetis Dei et apostolis magis comparandus est. . . . Vera humilitas Christi robustissime in eo regnat, tanquam a natura ei hæreret. . . . Cum hoc testimonium vir sanctus in medio sapientum proferret. . . . Ille enim sapiens cum sapientibus, rex cum regibus, anachoreta cum anachoretis, et monachus cum monachis . . . et pauper corde cum pauperibus." — Act. S. Bolland., vol. ii. June, p. 238.

it is brought from the cow: his breath refreshes them on their return from harvest. — The blacksmith carried to heaven by his alms. — His relations with the layman whose hospitality he claims: prophecy touching the rich miser who shuts his door upon him. — The five cows of his Lochaber host. — The poacher's spear. — He pacifies and consoles all whom he meets. — His prophetic threats against the felons and reivers. — Punishment inflicted upon the assassin of an exile. — Brigands of royal blood put down by Columba at the risk of his life. — He enters into the sea up to his knees to arrest the pirate who had pillaged his friend. — The standard-bearer of Cæsar and the old missionary.

Fatherly solicitude and charity the most marked features of his missionary life.

During all the rest of his life, which was to pass in his island of Iona, or in the neighboring districts of Scotland which had been evangelized by his unwearied zeal, nothing strikes and attracts the historian so much as the generous ardor of Columba's charity. The history of his whole life proves that he was born with a violent and even vindictive temper; but he had succeeded in subduing and transforming himself to such a point that he was ready to sacrifice all things to the love of his neighbor. It is not merely an apostle or a monastic founder whom we have before us — beyond and beside this it is a friend, a brother, a benefactor of men, a brave and untiring defender of the laborer, the feeble, and the poor: it is a man occupied not only with the salvation but also with the happiness, the rights, and the interests of all his fellow-creatures, and in whom the instinct of pity showed itself in a bold and continual interposition against all oppression and wickedness.

Without losing the imposing and solemn character which always accompanied his popular fame, he will now be revealed to us under a still more touching aspect, through all the long succession of his apostolic labors, and in the two principal occupations — agriculture and navigation — which gave variety to his missionary life.

Maritime life of the monks of Iona.

For navigation alternated with agriculture in the labors of the cenobites of Iona. The same monks who cultivated the scanty fields of the holy island, and who reaped and threshed the corn, accompanied Columba in his voyages to the neighboring isles, and followed the sailor's trade, then, it would seem, more general than now among the Irish race.[181] Communication was then frequent,

[181] "Lugbeus quadam ad Sanctum die post frugum veniens triturationem. . . . Idem simul cum sancto viro ad Caput Regionis (*Cantyre*) pergens, nauclerum et nautas adventantis barcæ interrogans." — Adamnan, i. 28.

not only between Ireland and Great Britain, but between Ireland and Gaul. We have already seen in the port of Nantes an Irish boat ready to carry away the founder of Luxeuil.[182] The Gaulish merchants came to sell or offer their wines as far as to the centre of the island, to the Abbey of Cloninacnoise.[183] In the life of our saint, seafaring populations,[184] are constantly spoken of as surrounding him, and receiving his continual visits; and exercises and excursions are also mentioned, which associate his disciples with all the incidents of a seafaring life. As a proof of this we quote four lines, in very ancient Irish, which may be thus translated: —

> "Honor to the soldiers who live at Iona;
> There are three times fifty under the monastic rule,
> Seventy of whom are appointed to row,
> And cross the sea in their leathern barks."

Boats of osier covered with hides.

These boats were sometimes hollowed out of the trunks of trees, like those which are still found buried in the *bogs* or turf-mosses of Ireland; but most generally they were made of osier, and covered with buffalo-skins, like those described by Cæsar.[185] Their size was estimated by the number of skins which had been used to cover them. They were generally small, and those made of one or two skins were portable. The abbot of Iona had one of this description for the inland waters when he travelled beyond the northern hills (*dorsum Britanniæ*), which he crossed so often to preach among the Picts.[186] At a later

[182] Vol. i. p. 567. "Navis quæ Scotorum commercia vexerat," says the biography of St. Columbanus.

[183] *Vita S. Kiarani*, c. 31, cited by REEVES, p. 57.

[184] "Nautæ, navigatores, remiges, nautici."

[185] "Corpus navium viminibus contextum coriis integebatur." — *Bell. Civil.*, i. 54.

> "Primum cana salix, madefacto vimine, parvam
> Texitur in puppim cæsoque induta juvenco."
>
> LUCAN, iv.

These boats were called in Celtic *Curach*, from which comes *curruca* or *currica* in monkish Latin. These osier canoes are still in use, under the name of *coracle*, in the Welsh seaports. They are composed of a light construction of willow lathes, covered either with skin or with tarpaulin. After their day's work the fishers put the coracle to dry, and, taking it on their backs, carry it to their cottage door. This has been seen by M. Alphonse Esquiros at Caermarthen. — *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15th February, 1865.

[186] "Mitte te in navim unius pellis. . . . Carabum ex duobus tantum coriis et demidio factum. . . . Nunc, nunc celerius nostram quam ultra rivum naviculam posuistis in domum, huc citius advehite, et in vicinore domuncula ponite." — ADAMNAN, i. 34.

period the community possessed many of a much larger size, to convey the materials for the reconstruction of the primitive monastery at Iona, and the timber which the sons of Columba cut down and fashioned in the vast oak forests which then covered the whole country, now so sadly deprived of wood. They went like galleys, with sail or oar, and were furnished with masts and rigging like modern boats. The holy island had at last an entire fleet at its disposal, manned and navigated by the monks.[187]

Their boldness at sea.

In these frail skiffs Columba and his monks ploughed the dangerous and stormy sea which dashes on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland, and penetrated boldly into the numberless gulfs and straits of the sombre Hebridean archipelago. They knew the perils to which their insular existence exposed them; but they braved those dangers without fear, accustomed as they were to live in the midst of storms,[188] upon an isle which the great waves of ocean threatened continually to swallow up. Not

The whirlpool of Corryvreckan.

less alarming was their position when the winds carried them towards the terrible whirlpool, named after a prince of the Niall family, who had been drowned there, the Caldron of Brechan, and which there was always a risk of being driven upon while crossing from Ireland to Scotland. The winds, when blowing from certain directions,

[187] This passage of Adamnan is very important for the history of the primitive Celtic navigation. "Cum dolatæ per terram pineæ et roboreæ traherentur longæ trabes *et magnæ navium pariter et domus materiæ eveherentur*. . . . Ea die qua nostri nautæ, omnibus præparatis, supra memoratarum ligna materiarum proponunt scaphis per mare et curucis trahere. . . . Per longas et obligas vias tota die properis flatibus, Deo propitio famulantibus, et plenis sine ulla retardatione velis, ad Ionam insulam omnis illa navalis emigratio prospere evenit." — ii. 45. The words in italics are the text given by the Bollandists (*Acta Sanctorum*, Junii, vol. ix. p. 275), which seems to us preferable to that of the MS. followed by Dr. Reeves. There is here question of three kinds of boats: *naves*, *scaphæ*, and *curucæ;* and it is evident that there must have been a workshop on the island for the building of the larger vessels, because great logs of wood were carried there destined to be employed in the building of boats as well as for the monastic buildings. In another passage (Adamnan, ii. 35), a transport boat, *oneraria navis*, is spoken of, manned by monks, and laden with osiers, which the abbot Columba had sent for to a neighboring property: "Virgarum fasciculos ad hospitium construendum."

[188] "Die fragosæ tempestatis et intolerabilis undarum magnitudinis. . . . Quis, ait (sanctus), hac die valde ventosa et nimis periculosa, licet breve, fretum prospere transnavigare potest?" — Adamnan, i. 4. This recalls the lines of the poet —

> "Quid rigor æternus cœli, quid frigora possunt,
> Ignotumque fretum?"
>
> Claudian, *in Consulat. III. Honor.*, v. 54.

hollow out in their whirl such terrible abysses about this spot, that even to our own time it has continued the terror of sailors. The holiest of Columba's guests passed it by with trembling, raising their hands towards heaven to implore the miracle which alone could save them.[189] But he himself, who one day was almost swallowed up in it, and whose mind was continually preoccupied by the recollection of his kindred, imagined that he saw in this whirlpool a symbol of the torments endured in purgatory by the soul of his relative who had perished at that spot, and of the duty of praying for the repose of that soul at the same time as he prayed for the safety of the companions of his voyage.[190]

Columba's prayers protect them against the sea-monsters.

Columba's prayers, his special and ardently desired blessing, and his constant and passionate intercession for his brethren and disciples, were the grand safeguard of the navigators of Iona, not only against wind and shipwrecks, but against other dangers which have now disappeared from these coasts. Great fishes of the cetaceous order swarmed at that time in the Hebridean sea. The sharks ascended even into the Highland rivers, and one of the companions of Columba, swimming across the Ness, was saved only by the prayer of the saint, at the moment when he was but an oar's length from the odious monster, which had before swallowed one of the natives.[191] The entire crew of a boat manned by monks took fright and turned back one day on meeting a whale, or per-

[189] "Nunc in undosis Charybdis Brecani æstibus valde periclitatur, ambasque ad cœlum, in prora sedens, palmas elevat." — ADAMNAN, i. 5. "Est vorago periculosissima marina, in qua, si qua navis intrat, non evadit." — *Vita Sancti Kiarani*, apud REEVES, 263. Compare GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS, *Topogr. Hiberniæ*, ii. 41. Walter Scott has not omitted this spot in his poetical itinerary —

> "I would
> That your eye could see the mood
> Of Corryvreckan's whirlpool rude,
> When dons the Hag her whitened hood. . . .
> And Scarba's isle, whose tortured shore
> Still rings to Corryvreckan's roar."

It must be remarked that as the name of Scotia has been transferred from Ireland to Scotland, the name of the abyss so feared by the sailors of Iona has also been transferred to the whirlpool which tourists see in the distance between the isles of Scarba and Iona, in the much-frequented route from Oban to Glasgow.

[190] "Illa sunt ossa Brecani cognati nostri, quæ voluit Christus ita nobis ostendi, ut pro defuncti refrigerio, ac pro nostro a præsenti periculo liberatione simul apud Dominum intercedamus." — O'DONNELL, ii. 21, apud COLGAN, p. 434.

[191] ADAMNAN, ii. 27.

haps only a shark more formidable than its neighbors; but on another occasion, the same Baithen who was the friend and successor of Columba, encouraged by the holy abbot's blessing, had more courage, continued his course, and saw the monster bury itself in the waves. "After all," said the monk, "we are both in the hands of God, both this monster and I."[192] Other monks, sailing in the high northern sea, were panic-struck by the appearance of hosts of unknown shell-fish, which, attaching themselves to the oars and sides of the boat, made holes in the hide with which the framework was covered.[193]

The love of solitude sends them into unknown seas.

It was neither curiosity nor love of gain, nor even a desire to convert the pagans, which stimulated Columba's disciples to dare all the dangers of navigation in one of the most perilous seas of the world; it was the longing for solitude, the irresistible wish to find a more distant retreat, an asylum still further off than that of Iona, upon some unknown rock amid the loneliness of the sea, where no one could join them, and from which they never could be brought back. They returned to Iona without having discovered what they were in search of, sad yet not discouraged; and after an interval of rest always took to sea again, to begin once more their anxious search.[194] It was thus that the steep and almost inaccessible island of St. Kilda,[195] made famous

Discovery of St. Kilda, the Faröe Isles, and Iceland.

[192] "Ecce cetus miræ et immensæ magnitudinis, se instar montis erigens, ora aperuit patula nimis dentosa. . . . Remiges, deposito velo, valde perterriti . . . illam obortam ex belluino motu fluctuationem vix evadere potuerunt. . . . Cui Baitheneus: Ego et illa bellua sub Dei potestate sumus. . . . Æquor et cetum, ambabus manibus elevatis, benedicit intrepidus. . . . Bellua magna se sub fluctu immergens . . . nusquam apparuit." — ADAMNAN, i. 19. Up to the eighteenth century whales frequented these parts, and they have been seen to capsize fishing-boats. — MARTIN'S *Western Islands*, p. 5. The whales have disappeared, as have also the seals, which as late as 1703 supplied food to the Hebridean islands. The Monastery of Iona kept a flock of them in a neighboring island: "Parvam insulam ubi marini nostri juris vituli generantur et generant." A robber attempted to take them away, but sheep were given up to him in preference." — ADAMNAN, i. 42.

[193] "Quædam, usque in id temporis invisæ mare obtegentes occurrerant tetræ et infestæ nimis bestiolæ quæ horribili impetu carinam et latera, puppimque et proram ita forti ferebant percussura, ut pelliceum tectum navis penetrale putarentur penetrare posse. Prope ranarum magnitudinem aculeis permolestæ, non volatiles, sed natatiles, sed et remorum palmulas infestabant." — ADAMNAN, ii. 42.

[194] "Desertum in pelago intransmeabili invenire optantes." — ADAMNAN, ii. 42. "Baitheneus . . . benedici a sancto petivit cum ceteris, in mari eremum quæsiturus, post longos per ventosa circuitus æquora, eremo non reperto, in patriam reversus." — *Ibid.*, i. 20.

[195] Several religious buildings of a very early date, and a church dedicated

by the daring of its bird-hunters, was first discovered; then far to the north of the Hebrides and even of the Orcades, they reached the Shetland Isles, and even, according to some, Iceland itself, which is only at the distance of a six days' voyage from Ireland, and where the first Christian church bore the name of St. Columba. Another of their discoveries was the Faröe Islands, where the Norwegians at a later date found traces of the sojourn of the Irish monks, Celtic books, crosses, and bells.[196] Cormac, the boldest of these bold explorers, made three long, laborious and dangerous voyages with the hope, always disappointed, of finding the wilderness of which he dreamed. The first time on landing at Orkney he escaped death, with which the savage inhabitants of that archipelago threatened all strangers, only by means of the *recommendat ons* which Columba had procured from the Pictish king, himself converted to the still pagan king of the northern islanders.[197] On another occasion the south wind drove him for fourteen successive

Cormac at the Orkneys.

to St. Columba, were to be found in St. Kilda as late as 1758. The inhabitants of the island, though Calvinists, still celebrated the saint's day by carrying all the milk of their dairies to the governor or farmer of the isle, which belonged then to a chief of the clan Macleod. This farmer distributed it in equal portions to every man, woman, and child in the island. — See *History of St. Kilda*, by Kenneth Macaulay. This islet, which is the most western spot in Europe, is celebrated for the exploits of the bird-catchers, who are suspended by long cords over perpendicular cliffs. It has scarcely eighty inhabitants. The site of the chapel called that of Columba is still shown, with a cemetery and some medicinal and consecrated springs. St. Columba's day is still observed by the people.

[196] Landnamabok, ap. *Antiq. Celto-Scand.*, p. 14. Dicuil, who wrote in 795, states that a hundred years before the Faroe Islands had been inhabited by "*eremitæ ex nostra Scotia navigantes.*" — Ed. Letronne, p. 39. Compare Innes, *Scotland in the Middle Ages*, p. 101, and Lanigan, *Eccles. History of Ireland*, c. 3, p. 225, where the question of the first discovery of Iceland is thoroughly investigated.

[197] "Brudeo regi, præsenti Orcadum regulo, commendavit dicens: Aliqui ex nostris nuper emigraverunt, desertum in pelago intransmeabili invenire optantes, qui si forte post longos circuitus Orcades devenerunt insulas, huic regulo cujus obsides in manu tua sunt, diligenter commenda . . . et propter supradictam S. viri commendationem, de morte in Orcadibus liberatus est vicina." — Adamnan, ii. 42. This passage will recall that of Ariosto, where he places in the Hebrides the scene of Olympia's deliverance by Roland, and attributes to the inhabitants of these islands the habit of exposing their women to sea monsters: —

> "Per distrugger quell' isola d'Ebuda
> Che di quante il mar cinge è la più cruda.
> Voi dovete saper ch'oltre l'Irlanda,
> Fra molte, che vi son, l'isola giace
> Nomata Ebuda, che per legge manda
> Rubando intorno il suo popol rapace."
>
> *Orlando Furioso*, ix. 11–12.

days and nights almost into the depths of the icy ocean, far beyond anything that the imagination of man had dreamed of in those days.[198]

Columba, the father and head of those bold and pious mariners, followed and guided them by his ever vigilant and prevailing prayers. He was in some respects present with them, notwithstanding the distance which separated them from the sanctuary and from the island harbors which they had left. Prayer gave him an intuitive knowledge of the dangers they ran. He saw them, he suffered and trembled for them; and immediately assembling the brethren who remained in the monastery by the sound of the bell, offered for them the prayers of the community. He implored the Lord with tears to grant the change of wind which was necessary for those at sea, and did not rise from his knees until he had a certainty that his prayers were granted. This happened often, and the saved monks, on returning from their dangerous voyages, hastened to him to thank and bless him for his prophetic and beneficent aid.[199]

His voyages and visits to the other Hebridean isles.

Often he himself accompanied them in their voyages of circumnavigation or exploration, and paid many visits to the isles of the Hebridean archipelago discovered or frequented by the sailors of his community, and where *cells* or little colonies from the great island monastery seem to have existed. This was specially the case at Eigg, where a colony of fifty-two monks, founded and ruled by a disciple of the abbot of Iona, were killed by pirates twenty years after his death.[200] This

[198] "Cormacus, qui tribus non minus vicibus eremum in Oceano laboriose quæsivit, nec tamen invenit." — ADAMNAN, i. 6. "Postquam a terris per infinitum Oceanum plenis enavigavit velis . . . usque ad mortem periclitari cœpit. Nam cum ejus navis a terris per quatuordecim æstivi temporis dies, totidemque noctes, plenis velis, austro flante vento, ad septentrionalis plagam cœli directo excurreret cursu, ejusmodi navigatio ultra humani excursus modum et irremeabilis videbatur." — *Ibid.*, ii. 42.

[199] "Eadem hora et sanctus noster, quamlibet longe absens corpore, spiritu tamen præsens in navi cum Cormaco erat. Unde . . . personante signo fratres ad orationem convocant. . . . Ecce enim nunc Cormacus cum suis nautis. . . . Christum intentius precatur: et nos ipsum orando adjuvemus. . . . Et post orationem cito surgit, et abstergens lacrymas . . . quia Dominus austrum nunc in aquilonarem convertit flatum, nostros de periculis commembres retrahentem, quos hic ad nos iterum reducat." — ADAMNAN, ii. 42.

[200] The tragedy of Eigg, which took place in 617, deserves special mention. According to Irish annals, St. Donnan, the founder of the community, was the friend and disciple of Columba. Desirous of finding a more solitary retreat, he established himself with some companions in the island in Eigg, which was then inhabited only by the sheep of the queen of the country (many of the islets near Staffa are at present used as pasture). The queen,

was a favorite spot which he loved to visit, no doubt to enjoy the solitude which was no longer to be found at Iona, where the crowds of penitents, pilgrims and petitioners increased from day to day. And he took special pleasure also in Skye, the largest of the Hebridean isles, which, after the lapse of twelve centuries, was recalled to the attention of the world by the dangerous and romantic adventures of Prince Charles-Edward and Flora Macdonald. It was then scarcely inhabited, though very large and covered by forests, in which he could bury himself and pray, leaving even his brethren far behind him. One day he met an immense wild boar pursued by dogs; with a single word he killed the ferocious brute, instead of protecting it; as in similar cases the saints of the Merovingian legends were so ready to do.[201] He continued during all the middle ages the patron of Skye, where a little lake still bears his name, as well as several spots, and monuments in the neighboring isles.[202]

The wild boar of Skye.

Storms often disturbed these excursions by sea, and then Columba showed himself as laborious and bold as the most tried of his monastic mariners. When all were engaged in rowing, he would not

While sailing with his monks he stills the storms by prayer.

informed of this invasion of her territory, commanded that all should be killed. When the murderers arrived on the island it was the eve of Easter, and mass was being said. Donnan begged them to wait until mass was over. They consented, and when the service was at an end the monks gave themselves up to the sword. According to another version the queen or lady of the soil sent pirates (latrones) to kill them. They were surprised singing psalms in their oratory, from whence they went into the refectory, in order that they might die where the most carnal moments of their life had been passed. There were fifty-two of them. This is the version given by the Bollandists, vol. ii. April, p. 487. As if by the special blessing of these martyrs, this isle was still Catholic in 1703, and St. Donnan was venerated. — MARTIN'S *Journey to the Western Islands*, p. 279.

[201] "Cum in Scia insula aliquantis demoraretur diebus, paulo longius solus, orationis intuitu, separatus a fratribus, silvam ingressus. . . . Venatici canes. . . . Ulterius huc procedere noles: in loco ad quem devenisti morere." — ADAMNAN, ii. 26.

[202] This lake has been drained by Lord Macdonald, the present proprietor of the island. The memory and name of Columba are distinctly to be found at *Eilea Naomhh*, where a well which he had hollowed in the rock, and the tomb of his mother *Eithne*, are still shown; and also at Tiree, so often mentioned by Adamnan under the name of *Terra Ethice*. In all the bleak islands of the western coast of Scotland, and especially of the district of Lorn (Argyllshire), there are sculptured crosses of curious and varied forms, tombstones, ruined chapels, buildings of coarse construction and singular shape, Druidical stones, and churches more or less ancient, almost always dedicated to Columba. These are carefully described in a small volume with engravings, which has been published anonymously by Thomas Muir, a Leith merchant, entitled *The Western Islands*; Edinburgh, 1861.

remain idle, but rowed with them.[203] We have seen him brave the frequent storms of the narrow and dangerous lakes in the north of Scotland.[204] At sea he retained the same courageous composure in the most tempestuous weather, and took part in all the sailors' toils. During the voyage which he made from Iona to Ireland, to attend with King Aïdan the parliament of Drumceitt, his vessel was in great danger; the waves dashed into the boat till it was full of water, and Columba took his part with the sailors in baling it out. But his companions stopped him. "What you are doing at present is of little service to us," they said to him; "you would do better to pray for those who are about to perish." He did so, and the sea grew calm from the moment when, mounting on the prow, he raised his arms in prayer.

With these examples before them, his companions naturally appealed to his intercession whenever storms arose during any of his voyages. On one occasion he answered them, "It is not my turn; it is the holy abbot Kenneth who must pray for us." Kenneth was the abbot of a monastery in Ireland, and a friend of Columba's who came often to Iona to visit him. At the very same hour he heard the voice of his friend echo in his heart, and, warned by an internal voice, left the refectory where he was, and hastened to the church to pray for the shipwrecked, crying, "We have something else to do than to dine when Columba is in danger of perishing at sea." He did not even take the time to put on both his shoes before he went to the church, for which he received the special thanks of his friend at Iona;[205] an incident which recalls another Celtic legend — that of the bishop St. Paternus, who obeyed the call of his metropolitan with a boot upon one foot only.[206]

[203] *Vita S. Comgelli*, ap. COLGAN, p. 458.

[204] See *ante*, p. 51.

[205] "In mari periclitari cœpit; totum namque vas navis, valde concussum, magnis undarum cumulis fortiter ferebatur. Nautæ tum forte sancto sentinam cum illis exhaurire conanti aiunt: Quod nunc agis non magnopere nobis proficit periclitantibus, exorare potius debes pro pereuntibus. Et intentans precem . . . aquam cessat amaram exinanire . . . dulcem fundere cœpit. Sæva nimis insistente et periculosa tempestate: Hac in die non est meum pro vobis in periculo orare, sed est abbatis Cainnachi sancti viri. . . . Spiritu revelante sancto, supradictam sancti Columbæ interiore cordis aure vocem audiens. . . . Non est tempus prandere quando in mari periclitatur navis sancti Columbæ. . . . Nunc valde nobis proficit tuus ad ecclesiam velox cum uno calceamento cursus." — ADAMNAN, ii. 12, 13.

[206] Vol. i. p. 472. Cainnach or Kenneth, a saint very popular in Scotland, whose name has been borne by several Scottish kings, was abbot of Aghaboe, in the diocese of Ossory. Born about 517, he died in 600, and

He is invoked everywhere the master of the winds.

Under all these legendary digressions it is evident that the monastic apostle of Caledonia, apart from the prevailing efficacy of his prayers, had made an attentive study of the winds and of all the phenomena of nature which affected the lives of the insular and maritime people whom he sought to lead into Christianity. A hundred different narratives represent him to us as the Eolus of those fabulous times and dangerous seas. He was continually entreated to grant a favorable wind for such or such an expedition; it even happened one day that two of his monks, on the eve of setting out in two different directions, came to him to ask, the one a north wind, and the other a south wind. He granted the prayer of both, but by delaying the departure of the one who was going to Ireland until after the arrival of the other, who went only to the neighboring isle of Tiree.[207]

Thus it happened that from far and near Columba was invoked or feared by the sailors as the master of all the winds that blew. Libran of the Rushes, the generous penitent whose curious history has been already recorded, wishing to return from Ireland to Iona, was turned back by the crew of the boat which was leaving the port of Derry for Scotland, because he was not a member of the community of Iona. Upon which the disappointed traveller mentally invoked across the sea the help of his absent friend. The wind immediately changed, and the boat was driven back to land. The sailors saw poor Libran still lingering upon the shore, and called to him from the deck, "Perhaps it is because of thee that the wind has changed; if we take thee with us, art thou disposed to make it once more favorable?" "Yes," said the monk; "the holy abbot Columba, who imposed upon me seven years of penitence, whom I have obeyed, and to whom I wish to return, will obtain that grace for you." And the result was that he was taken on board, and the journey was happily accomplished.[208]

left his name to the neighboring islet of Inch-Kenneth, near Iona, which was visited by Johnson.

[207] "Simul unanimes postulant ut ipse a Domino postulans impetraret prosperum crastina die ventum sibi dari diversa emigraturis via." — ADAMNAN, ii. 15.

[208] "Clamitans de litore rogitat ut ipsum nautæ cum eis susciperent navigaturum ad Britanniam. Sed ipsi refutaverunt eum, quia non erat de monachis sancti Columbæ. . . . Videntes virum . . . secus flumen cursitantem . . . ad ipsum de navi clamitantes. . . . Qui statim, rate ascensa: In nomine Omnipotentis, ait, cui sanctus Columba inculpabiliter servit, tensis rudentibus, levate velum." — ADAMNAN, ii. 39.

These events took place in his lifetime; but during at least a century after his death he remained the patron, always popular and propitious, of sailors in danger. A tone of familiar confidence, and sometimes of filial objurgation, may be remarked in their prayers, such as may be found among the Celts of Armorica and the Catholic nations of the south of Europe. Adamnan confesses that he himself and some other monks of Iona, embarked in a flotilla of a dozen boats charged with oaken beams for the reconstruction of the monastery, were so detained by contrary winds in a neighboring island that they took to accusing their Columba. "Dear saint," they said to him, "what dost thou think of this delay? We thought up to this moment that thou hadst great favor with God." Another time, when they were detained by the same cause in a bay near the district of Lorn, precisely on the vigil of St. Columba's day, they said to him, "How canst thou leave us to pass thy feast to-morrow among laymen, and not in thine own church? It would be so easy for thee to obtain from the Lord that this contrary wind should become favorable, and permit us to sing mass in thy church!" On these two occasions their desires were granted; the wind changed suddenly, and permitted them to get to sea and make their way to Iona in those frail boats whose spars, crossing upon the mast, formed the august symbol of redemption. More than a hundred witnesses of these facts were still living when the biographer of our saint wrote his history.[209]

This tender and vigilant charity, which lent itself to all the incidents of a sailor's and traveller's life, becomes still more strongly apparent during all the phases of his existence, in his relations with the agricultural population, whether of Ireland, which was his cradle, or of his adopted country Caledonia. Amid the fabulous legends and apocryphal and childish miracles with which Irish historians have filled out the glorious story of the great missionary,[210] it is pleasant to

[209] "Quodam modo quasi accusare nostrum Columbam cœpimus. . . . Placetne tibi, sancte, hæc nobis adversa retardatio? huc usque a te, Deo propitio, aliquod nostrorum laborum speravimus consolationum adjumentum, te æstimantes alicujus esse grandis apud Deum honoris. . . . Placetne tibi, sancte, crastinam tuæ festivitatis inter plebeios et non in tua ecclesia transigere diem? . . . tui natalis missarum solemnia celebremus. . . . Proinde orantes nautæ vela subrigunt . . . tum nautæ antennas, crucis instar, et vela protensis sublevans rudentibus, prosperis et lenibus ventis eadem die appetentes insulam." — ADAMNAN, ii. 45.

[210] The pious Franciscan Colgan, who has included in his collection of *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ* (unhappily incomplete) so many fables, has, not-

Benefits conferred upon agriculturists.

be able to discover the unmistakable evidence of his intelligence and fruitful solicitude for the necessities, the labors, and the sufferings of the inhabitants of the rural districts, and his active intervention on their behalf. When the legend tells us how, with one stroke of his crosier, he made fountains of sweet waters spring in a hundred different corners of Ireland or Scotland, in arid and rocky districts, such as that of the peninsula of Ardnamurchan,[211] when it shows him lowering, by his prayers, the cataracts of a river so that the salmon could ascend in the fishing season, as they have always done since, to the great benefit of the dwellers by the stream,[212] we recognize in the tale the most touching expression of popular and national gratitude for the services which the great monk rendered to the country, by teaching the peasants to search for the fountains, to regulate the irrigations, and to rectify the course of the rivers, as so many other holy monks have done in all European lands.

It is equally apparent that he had with zeal and success established the system of grafting and the culture of fruit-

withstanding, omitted a crowd of incredible narratives which his predecessors had adopted. "Nonnulla . . . tanquam ex monumentis vel apocryphis, vel ex rerum forte vere gestorum nimia exaggeratione speciem fabulæ præferentibus, consulte omittenda duximus. . . . Quia nobis apparent vel exegetum vel librariorum (qui miris mirabiliora immiscuerunt) licentiis et commentis ita essa depravata ut solum fabularum speciem præferant." — *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 441. The Bollandists protested with still greater energy, and repeatedly, against the fables which they, nevertheless, thought themselves obliged to reproduce. "Vitæ hujus auctor aliquid habere videtur de genio Hibernico, cui solet esse perquam familiare, ambulare in mirabilibus, in rebus, inquam, supra fidem prodigiosis, ne dicam portentosis." — Vol. iii. August, p. 658. Compare the same volume, p. 742, and vol. ii. July, p. 241, and 299.

[211] "Tergemino pedi in terram ictu, tergeminos fontes erumpere fecit." — O'Donnell, book i. c. 86; Adamnan, i. 12, ii. 10.

[212] "Columba ratus eam fluminis sterilitatem a prædicta cataracta derivari, et in commune vergere accolarum dominorumque ejus ditionis damnum, fluvium benedixit, rupique in Christi nomine jussit tantum subsidere quantum opus esset ut pisces ultro citroque libere commearent. Paruit confestim sancti viri imperio præfracta rupes et . . . facta est demissior, ut exinde et confluentium illuc piscium, præsertim vero salmonum (quorum et frequentissima et copiosissima ab eo tempore per universum fluvium fit captura) ascensui non obsistat, et nihilominus subjecto vertici adeo promineat, ut videatur a naturalibus contra impetuose ruentis fluvii ictum, magis sancti viri merito, quam innata agilitate conscendi." — O'Donnell, *Vita Quinta*, book ii. c. 92. The river here spoken of is the Erne, a river of Ulster, which throws itself into the sea after having crossed the two great lakes called Lough Erne. In recollection of this benefit the historian tells us that all the produce of the fisheries on St. Columba's day was left for the *coarb* — that is to say, for the abbot, who held the first rank among the successors of the saint in the monasteries he had founded.

trees, when we read the legend which represents him to us, at the beginning of his monastic career in Durrow, the most ancient of his foundations, approaching, in autumn, a tree covered with sour and unwholesome fruit, to bless it, and saying, "In the name of Almighty God, let thy bitterness leave thee, O bitter tree, and let thy apples be henceforward as sweet as up to this time they have been sour!"[213] At other times he is said to have obtained for his friends quick and abundant harvests, enabling them, for example, to cut barley in August which they had sown in June — a thing which then seemed a miracle, but is not without parallel in Scotland at the present time.[214] Thus almost invariably the recollection of a service rendered, or of a benefit asked or spontaneously conferred, weds itself in the legend to the story of miracles and outbursts of wonder-working prayer — which, in most cases, were for the benefit of the cultivators of the soil: it is evident that he studied their necessities and followed their vicissitudes with untiring sympathy.

His zeal against epidemics.

In the same spirit he studied and sought remedies for the infectious diseases which threatened life, or which made ravages among the cattle of the country. Seated one day upon a hillock in his island, he said to the monk who was with him, and who belonged to the Dalriadian colony, "Look at that thick and rainy cloud which comes from the north; it has within it the germs of a deadly sickness: it is about to fall upon a large district of our Ireland, bringing ulcers and sores upon the body of man and beast. We must have pity on our brethren. Quick, let us go down, and to-morrow thou shalt embark and go to their aid." The monk obeyed, and, furnished with bread which Columba had blessed, he went over all the district smitten by the pestilence, distributing to the first sick persons he met, water, in which the bread blessed by the exiled abbot, who concerned himself so anxiously about the lot of his countrymen, had been steeped. The remedy worked so well, that

[213] "Quædam arbor valde pomosa . . . de qua cum incolæ loci quoddam haberent pro nimia fructus amaritudine querimonium. . . . Vident lignum incassum abundos habere fructus qui ex eis gustantes plus læderent quam delectarent. . . . In nomine omnipotentis Dei, omnis tua amaritudo, o arbor amara, a te recedat; tua huc usque amarissima nunc in dulcissima vertantur poma. . . . Dicto citius eodemque momento, omnia poma . . . in miram versa sunt dulcedinem." — ADAMNAN, ii. 2. "Arborem plenam fructu qui erat hominibus inutilis præ nimia amaritudine," it is said in a similar legend told of another Irish saint, Mochoënoroc. — Ap. COLGAN, *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ*, p. 592.

[214] *New Statistical Account*, quoted by REEVES, p. 459.

from all parts both men and beasts crowded round the messenger of Iona, and the praises of Christ and his servant Columba resounded far and wide.[215]

Thus we see the saint continually on the watch for those evils, losses, and accidents which struck the families or nations specially interesting to him, and which were revealed to him either by a supernatural intuition or by some plaintive appeal. Sometimes we find him sending the blessed bread, which was his favorite remedy, to a holy girl who had broken her leg in returning from mass; sometimes curing others of ophthalmia by means of salt also blessed; everywhere on his evangelical journeys, or other expeditions, we are witnesses of his desire, and the pains he took, to heal all the sick that were brought to him, or who awaited him on the roadside, eager, like the little idiot of Clonmacnoise, to touch the border of his robe — an accompaniment which had followed him during the whole course of his journey to the national assembly of Drumceitt.[216]

His entire life bears the mark of his ardent sympathy for the laborers in the fields. From the time of his early travels as a young man in Ireland, when he furnished the ploughmen with ploughshares, and had the young men trained to the trade of blacksmith,[217] up to the days of his old age, when he could only follow far off the labor of his monks, his paternal tenderness never ceased to exercise on their account its salutary and beneficent influence. Seated in the little wooden hut which answered the purpose of a cell, he interrupted his studies, and put down his pen, to bless the monks as they came back from the fields, the pastures, or the barns.

[215] "Hæc nubes valde nocua hominibus et pecoribus erit . . . velocius transvolans super Scotiæ portum . . . purulenta humanis in corporibus et in pecorum uberibus nasci faciet ulcera. . . . Sed nos eorum miserati subvenire languoribus, Domino miserante, debemus. Tu ergo, nunc mecum descendens, navigationem præpara crastina die. . . . Cujus rumor per totam illam morbo pestilentiore vastatam regionem cito divulgatus, omnem morbidum ad sancti Columbæ legatum invitavit populum . . . homines cum pecudibus salvati Christum in sancto Columba laudarunt." — ADAMNAN, ii. 7.

[216] "Maugina, sancta virgo . . . ab oratorio post missam domum reversa titubavit. . . . Sorori et suæ nutrici profecturam quæ ophthalmiæ laborabat valde gravi labore. . . . Diversorum languores infirmorum invocato Christi nomine, sanavit . . . ad regum pergens condictum in Dorsi Cete. Aut sanctæ manus protensione . . . aut etiam fimbriæ ejus tactu amphibali." — ADAMNAN, ii. 5, 6, 7, 35.

[217] "Conquerentibus agricolis deesse ad arandum ferramenta, amissum aratri vomerem (restituit); juvenem quemdam . . . nunquam alias fabrilibus assuetum solo verbo protinus ferramentorum fabrum effecit; qui mox ad sancti imperium pro colonis vomerem, cultrumque faberrime cudit." — O'DONNELL, *Quinta Vita*, i. 68.

The younger brethren, after having milked the cows of the community, knelt down, with their pails full of new milk, to receive from a distance the abbot's blessing, sometimes accompanied by an exhortation useful to their souls.[218] During one of the last summers of his life, the monks, returning in the evening from reaping the scanty harvest of their island, stopped short as they approached the monastery, suddenly touched with strange emotion. The steward of the monastery, Baithen, the friend and future successor of Columba, asked them, "Are you not sensible of something very unusual here?" "Yes," said the oldest of the monks, "every day, at this hour and place, I breathe a delicious odor, as if all the flowers in the world were collected here. I feel also something like the flame of the hearth which does not burn but warms me gently; I experience, in short, in my heart a joy so unusual, so incomparable, that I am no longer sensible of either trouble or fatigue. The sheaves which I carry on my back, though heavy, weigh upon me no longer; and I know not how, from this spot to the monastery, they seem to be lifted from my shoulders. What, then, is this wonder?" All the others gave the same account of their sensations. "I will tell you what it is," said the steward; "it is our old master, Columba, always full of anxiety for us, who is disturbed to find us so late, who vexes himself with the thought of our fatigue, and who, not being able to come to meet us with his body, sends us his spirit to refresh, rejoice, and console us."[219]

The reapers of Iona perfumed and refreshed by his spirit.

It must not be supposed, however, that he reserved his solicitude for his monastic laborers alone. Far from that, he knew how to appreciate the work of laymen when sanctified by Christian

The blacksmith carried to heaven by his alms.

[218] "Sedens in tuguriolo tabulis suffulto. . . . Juvenis ad januam tugurioli in quo vir beatus scribebat, post vaccarum reversus mulsionem, in dorso portans vasculum novo plenum lacte, dicit ad sanctum ut juxta morem tale benediceret onus." — ADAMNAN, i. 25, ii. 16, iii. 22.

[219] "Post messionis opera vespere ad monasterium redeuntes. . . . Quamdam miri odoris fragrantiam ac si universorum florum in unum sentio collectorum; quanquam quoque quasi ignis ardorem, non pœnalem, sed quodam modo suavem; sed et quamdam in corde insuetam et incomparabilem infusam lætificationem, quæ me subito consolatur et lætificat ita ut nullius mœroris, nullius laboris meminisse possim. Sed et onus quod meo, quanquam grave, porto in dorso, ab hoc loco usque ad monasterium, in tantum relevatur, ut me oneratum non sentiam. . . . Sic omnes operarii sed singillatim proficentur. . . . Scitis quod senior noster Columba de nos anxie cogitet et nos ad se tardius pervenientes ægre ferat nostri memor laboris, et idcirco quia corporaliter obviam nobis non venit, spiritus ejus nostris obviat gressibus, qui taliter non consolans lætificat." — ADAMNAN, i. 37.

virtue. "See," he said one day to the elders of the monastery, "at this moment while I speak, such a one who was a blacksmith yonder in Ireland — see him, how he goes up to heaven! He dies an old man, and he has worked all his life; but he has not worked in vain. He has bought eternal life with the work of his hands; for he dispensed all his gains in alms: and I see the angels who are going for his soul." [220] It will be admitted that the praise of manual labor, carried to a silly length in our days, had been rarely expressed in a manner so solemn and touching.

His relations with the laymen whose hospitality he received.

It is also recorded that he took pleasure in the society of laymen during his journeys, and lived among them with a free and delightful familiarity. This is one of the most attractive and instructive phases of his history. He continually asked and received the hospitality not only of the rich, but also of the poor: and sometimes, indeed, received a more cordial reception from the poor than from the rich. To those who refused him a shelter he predicted prompt punishment. "That miser," he said, "who despises Christ in the person of a traveller, shall see his wealth diminish from day to day and come to nothing; he will come to beggary, and his son shall go from door to door holding out his hand, which shall never be more than half filled." [221] When the poor received him under their roof, he inquired with his ordinary thoughtfulness into their resources, their necessities, all their little possessions. At that period a man seems to have been considered very poor in Scotland who had only five cows. This was all the fortune of a Lochaber peasant in whose house Columba, who continually traversed this district when going to visit the king of the Picts, passed a night and found a very cordial welcome notwithstanding the poverty of the house. Next morning he had the five little cows brought into his presence and blessed them, predicting to his host that he should soon have five hundred, and that the blessing of the grateful missionary should go down to his children and grandchildren — a prophecy which was faithfully fulfilled.[222]

The five cows of his host at Lochaber.

[220] "Faber ferrarius non incessum laboravit, qui de propria manuum laboratione suarum præmia felix comparuit æterna. Ecce nunc anima ejus vehitur a sanctis angelis ad cœlestis patriæ gaudia." — ADAMNAN, iii. 9.

[221] "De quodam viro divite tenacissimo . . . qui sanctum Columbam despexerat nec cum hospitio receperat . . . et illius avari divitiæ. qui Christum in peregrinis hospitibus sprevit. . . . Ipse mendicabit, et filius cum semivacua de domo in domum perula discurret." — *Ibid.*, ii. 20.

[222] "Hic Nesanus cum esset valde inops . . . hospitaliter et secundum

In the same district of Lochaber, which is still the scene of those great deer-stalking expeditions in which the British aristocracy delight, our saint was one day accosted by an unfortunate poacher, who had not the means of maintaining his wife and children, and who asked alms from him. "Poor man," said Columba, "go and cut me a rod in the forest." When the rod was brought to him, the abbot of Iona himself sharpened it into the form of a spear. When he had done this he blessed the improvised javelin, and gave it to his suppliant, telling him that if he kept it carefully, and used it only against wild beasts, venison should never be wanting in his poor house. This prophecy also was fulfilled. The poacher planted his blessed spear in a distant corner of the forest, and no day passed that he did not find there a hart or doe, or other game, so that he soon had enough to sell to his neighbors as well as to provide for all the necessities of his own house.[223]

Gift of a blessed spear to the poacher.

Columba thus interested himself in all that he saw, in all that went on around him, and which he could turn to the profit of the poor or of his fellow-creatures; even in hunting or fishing he took pains to point out the happy moment and most favorable spot where the largest salmon or pike might be found.[224] Wherever he found himself in contact with the poor or with strangers, he drew them to himself and comforted them even more by the warm sympathy of his generous heart than by material benefits. He identified himself with their fears, their dangers, and their vexations. Always a peacemaker and consoler,

He pacifies and consoles all those whom he meets.

vires unius noctis spatio ministrasset . . . ab eo inquirit cujus boculas numeri haberet . . . quinque. . . . Ab hac die tuæ paucæ vaculæ crescent usque ad centum et quinque vaccarum numerum. Nesanus homo plebeius erat cum uxore et filiis. . . . Vir sanctus, quadam nocte quum apud supramemoratum . . . inopem bene hospitaretur, mane primo de quantitate et qualitate substantiæ plebeium hospitem interrogat." — ADAMNAN, ii. 21. The district of Lochaber, celebrated in the modern wars of Scotland, is situated upon the borders of the counties of Argyle and Inverness, on the way from Iona to the residence of the Pictish king, and was consequently often crossed by Columba.

[223] "Plebeius pauperrimus, mendicus . . . quo unde maritam et parvulos cibaret non habebat quadam nocte. . . . Miselle homuncio, tolle de silva contulum vicina et ad me cujus defer. . . . Quem sanctus excipiens in veru exacuit propria manu, benedicens et illi assignans inopi. . . . Quamdiu talem habebis sudem, nunquam in domo tua cervinæ carnis cibatio abundans deerit. Miser mendiculus . . . valde gavisus . . . veru in remotis infexit terrulæ locis, quæ silvestres frequentabant feræ . . . nulla transire poterat dies in quo non aut cervum aut cervam reperiret in veru infixo cecidisse." — ADAMNAN, ii. 37.

[224] *Ibid.*, ii. 19.

he took advantage here of the night's shelter given him by a rich mountaineer to end a dispute between two angry neighbors;[225] and there made a chance meeting in a Highland gorge with a countryman an occasion for reassuring the peasant as to the consequences of the ravages made in his district by Pictish or Saxon invaders. "My good man," he said, "thy poor cattle and thy little all have fallen into the hands of the robbers; but thy dear little family is safe — go home and be comforted."[226]

Such was this tender and gentle soul. His charity might sometimes seem to have degenerated into feebleness, so great was the pleasure he took in all the details of benevolence and Christian brotherhood; but let there appear an injustice to repair, an unfortunate individual to defend, an oppressor to punish, an outrage against humanity or misfortune to avenge, and Columba immediately awoke and displayed all the energy of his youth. The former man reappeared in a moment; his passionate temperament recovered the mastery — his distinctive character, vehement in expression and resolute in action, burst forth at every turn; and his natural boldness led him, in the face of all dangers, to lavish remonstrances, invectives, and threats, which the justice of God, too rarely visible in such cases, sometimes deigned to fulfil.

Among the many sufferers whom he found on his way, it is natural to suppose that the exiles, who were so numerous in consequence of the discords which rent the Celtic races, would most of all call forth his sympathy. Himself an exile, he was the natural protector of all who were exiled.[227] He took under his special guardianship a banished Pict, of noble family, probably one of those who had received him with kindness, and listened to his teachings at the time of his first missions in Northern Caledonia. Columba confided, or, as

[225] "In domo cujus plebeii divitis. . . . Fortgini nomine . . . ubi cum sanctus hospitaretur, inter rusticanos contendentes duos . . . recta judicatione judicavit." — ADAMNAN, ii. 17.

[226] "Ubi, ait, habitas . . . tuam quam dicis provinciolam nunc barbari populantur vastatores. Quo audito, miser plebeius maritam et filios deplangere cœpit. Valde mœrentem consolans inquit: Vade, homuncule, vade, tua familiola tota in montem fugiens evasit: tua vero omnia pecuscula . . . omnemque supellectilem cum præda sævi raptores rapuere." — *Ibid.*, i. 46.

[227] "Almus pater, exsulum et depressorum pius patronus," says Manus O'Donnell (b. ii. c. 3), who was at once the grandnephew and biographer of the saint, with a sentiment only too natural to a scion of one of those great Irish families which have always preferred exile and destitution to apostasy.

the historian says, recommended, assigned *in manum*, according to the custom which came to be general in feudal times, his banished friend to a chief called Feradagh, who occupied the large island of Islay, south of Iona, praying him to conceal his guest for some months among his clan and dependants. A few days after he had solemnly accepted the trust, this villain had the noble exile treacherously murdered, no doubt for the sake of the articles of value he had with him. When he received the news, Columba cried, "It is not to me, it is to God, that this wretched man, whose name shall be effaced out of the book of life, has lied. It is summer now, but before autumn comes — before he can eat of the meat which he is fattening for his table — he shall die a sudden death, and be dragged to hell." The indignant old man's prophecy was reported to Feradagh, who pretended to laugh at it, but nevertheless kept it in his mind. Before the beginning of autumn, he ordered a fattened pig to be killed and roasted, and even before the animal was entirely cooked gave orders that part of it should be served to him, in order to prove, at the earliest possible moment, the falsehood of the prophesied vengeance. But scarcely had he taken up the morsel, when, before he had carried it to his mouth, he fell back and died. Those who were present admired and trembled to see how the Lord God honored and justified His prophet;[228] and those who knew Columba's life as a young man recalled to each other how, at the very beginning of his monastic life, the murderer of the innocent maiden had fallen dead at the sound of his avenging voice.[229]

Punishment of the exile's assassin.

In his just wrath against the spoilers of the poor and the persecutors of the Church, he drew back before no danger, not even before the assassin's dagger.

Robbers of royal race.

[228] "Quemdam de nobili Pictorum genere exsulem, in manum alicujus Feradachi divitis viri . . . diligenter assignans commendavit, ut in ejus comitatu, quasi unus de amicis, aliquos menses conversaretur. Quem cum tali commendatione de sancti manu viri commendatum suscepisset . . . trucidavit. . . . Non mihi, sed Deo infelix homunculus mentitus est, cujus nomen de libro vitæ delebitur. . . . Antequam de suilla degustet carne arboreo saginata fructu. . . . Despiciens irrisit sanctum. Scrofa nucum impinguata nucleis jugulatur . . . de qua celeriter ex interita partem sibi in veru celerius assari præcipit, ut de ea impatiens prægustans beati viri prophetationem destrueret . . . ad quam extensam manum priusquam ad os converteret . . . mortuus retro in dorsum cecidit . . . Valde tremefacti, admirantes, Christum in sancto propheta honorificantes glorificarunt." — ADAMNAN, ii. 23.

[229] See *ante*, page 8.

Among the reivers who infested Scottish Caledonia, making armed incursions into their neighbors' lands, and carrying on that system of pillage which, up to the eighteenth century, continued to characterize the existence of the Scottish clans, he had distinguished the sons of Donnell, who belonged to a branch of the family which ruled the Dalriadian colony. Columba did not hesitate to excommunicate them. Exasperated by this sentence, one of these powerful ill-doers, named or surnamed Lamm-Dess (*Right-hand*) took advantage of a visit which the great abbot paid to a distant island, and undertook to murder him in his sleep. But Finn-Lugh, one of the saint's companions, having had some suspicion or instinctive presentiment of danger, and desiring to save his father's life by the sacrifice of his own, borrowed Columba's cowl, and wrapped himself in it. The assassin struck him whom he found clothed in the well-known costume of the abbot, and then fled. But the sacred vestment proved impenetrable armor to the generous disciple, who was not even wounded. Columba, when informed of the event, said nothing at the moment. But a year after, when he had returned to Iona, the abbot said to his community, "A year ago Lamm-Dess did his best to murder my dear Finn-Lugh in my place; now at this moment it is he who is being killed." And, in fact, the news shortly arrived that the assassin had just died under the sword of a warrior, who struck the fatal blow while invoking the name of Columba, in a fight which brought the depredations of these reivers to an end.[230]

Some time before, another criminal of the same family, called Joan, had chosen for his victim one of the hosts of Columba, one of those poor men whom the abbot had enriched by his blessing in exchange for the hospitality which even in their poverty they had not refused. This poor man lived on the wild and barren peninsula of Ardnamurchan, a sombre mass which rises up out of the waves of the Atlantic, and forms the most western point of the Scottish mainland. The benediction of the missionary had brought him good fortune, as had been the case with the peasant of Lochaber, and his five cows, too, had multiplied, and were then more

[230] "In insula Himba commoratus. . . . Ille vero sceleratus, cujus nomen latine *Manus dextera* dicitur. . . . Usque in hanc diem integratus est annus ex quo Lamm-Dess in quantum potuit Finn-Lughum meum meo jugulavit vice; sed et ipse, ut æstimo, hac in hora jugulatur. In aliqua virorum utrinque acta belligeratione, Cronani filii Baithani jaculo transfixus in nomine, ut fertur, sancti Columbæ, emisso, interimit, et post ejus interitum viri belligerare cessarunt." — ADAMNAN, ii. 24.

than a hundred in number. Columba was not satisfied with merely enriching his humble friend, but gave him also a place in his affections, and had even bestowed upon him his own name: so that all his neighbors called him *Columbain*, the friend of St. Columba. Three times in succession, Joan, the princely spoiler, had pillaged and ravaged the house of the enriched peasant, the friend of the abbot of Iona; the third time, as he went back with his bravos, laden with booty, to the boat which awaited him on the beach, he met the great abbot, whom he had supposed far distant. Columba reproved him for his exactions and crimes, and entreated him to give up his prey; but the reiver continued his course, and answered only by an immovable silence, until he had gained the beach and entered his boat. As soon as he was in his vessel he began to answer the abbot's prayers by mockeries and insults. Then the noble old man plunged into the sea, up to his knees, as if to cling to the boat which contained the spoils of his friend; and when it went off he remained for some time with his two hands raised towards heaven, praying with ardor. When his prayer was ended, he came out of the water, and returned to his companions, who were seated on a neighboring mound, to dry himself. After a pause he said to them, "This miserable man, this evil-doer, who despises Christ in his servants, shall never more land upon the shore from which you have seen him depart — he shall never touch land again. To-day a little cloud begins to rise in the north, and from that cloud comes a tempest that shall swallow him up, him and his; not one single soul shall escape to tell the tale." The day was fine, the sea calm, and the sky perfectly serene. Notwithstanding, the cloud which Columba had announced soon appeared; and the spectators, turning their eyes to the sea, saw the tempest gather, increase, and pursue the spoilers. The storm reached them between the islands of Mull and Colonsay, from whose shores their boat was seen to sink and perish, with all its crew and all its spoils.[231]

[231] "Columbanum, quem de paupere virtus benedictionis ejus ditem fecit, valde diligebat. . . . Quidam malefactor homo, bonorum persecutor . . . prosequebatur sancti amicum Columbæ. . . . Accidit ut tertia vice . . . beatum virum, quem quasi longius positum despexerat, ad navem revertens mœste obviam haberet. . . . Immitis et insuadibilis permanens . . . navimque cum præda ascendens, beatum virum subsannabat et deridebat. Quem sanctus ad mare usque prosecutus est, vitreasque intrans aquas usque ad genua æquoreas, levatis ad cœlum ambis manibus, Christum intente precatur. . . . Hic miserabilis homuncio, qui Christum in suis despexit servis, ad

We have all read in Cæsar's Commentaries how, when he landed on the shores of Britain, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion threw himself into the sea, up to the knees in water, to encourage his comrades. Thanks to the perverse complaisance of history for all feats of force, this incident is immortal. Cæsar, however, moved by depraved ambition, came but to oppress a free and innocent race, and to bring it under the odious yoke of Roman tyranny, of which, happily, it has retained no trace. How much grander and more worthy of recollection, I do not say to every Christian, but to every upright soul, is the sight offered to us at the other extremity of the great Britannic Isle, by this old monk, who also rushed into the sea up to his knees — but to pursue a savage oppressor, in the interest of an obscure victim, thus claiming for himself, under his legendary aureole, the everlasting greatness of humanity, justice, and pity!

CHAPTER VII.

COLUMBA'S LAST YEARS — HIS DEATH — HIS CHARACTER.

Columba the confidant of the joys and consoler of the sorrows of domestic life. — He blesses little Hector with the fair locks. — He prays for a woman in her delivery; he reconciles the wife of a pilot to her husband. — Vision of the saved wife who receives her husband in heaven. — He continues his missions to the end of his life. — Visions before death. — The Angels' Hill. — Increase of austerities. — Nettle-soup his sole food. — A supernatural light surrounds him during his nightly work and prayers. — His death is retarded for four years by the prayers of the community. — When this respite has expired, he takes leave of the monks at their work; he visits and blesses the granaries of the monastery. — He announces his death to his attendant Diarmid. — His farewell to his old white horse. — Last benediction to the isle of Iona; last work of transcription; last message to his community. — He dies in the church. — Review of his life and character.

portum, a quo nuper coram vobis emigravit, nunquam revertetur; sed nec ad alias quas appetit, terras . . . cum suis perveniet malis cooperatoribus. Hodie, quam mox videbitis, de nube a borea orta inmitis immissa procella cum cum sociis submerget: nec de eis etiam unus remanebit fabulator. . . . Die serenissima, et ecce de mari oborta, sicut sanctus dixerat, nubes cum magno fragore venti emissa, raptorem cum præda inter Malcam et Colonsam insulas inveniens . . . submersit." — ADAMNAN, ii. 22.

By the side of the terrible acts of vengeance which have just been narrated, the student loves to find in this bold enemy of the wicked and the oppressor a gentle and familiar sympathy for all the affections as well as all the trials of domestic life. Rich and poor, kings and peasants, awoke in his breast the same kindly emotion, expressed with the same fulness. When King Aïdan brought his children to him, and spoke of his anxiety about their future lives, he did not content himself with seeing the eldest. "Have you none younger?" said the abbot; "bring them all — let me hold them in my arms and on my heart!" And when the younger children were brought, one fair-haired boy, Hector (Eochaidh Buidhe), came forward running, and threw himself upon the saint's knees. Columba held him long pressed to his heart, then kissed his forehead, blessed him, and prophesied for him a long life, a prosperous reign, and a great posterity.[232]

Let us listen while his biographer tells how he came to the aid of a woman in extremity, and how he made peace in a divided household. One day at Iona he suddenly stopped short while reading, and said with a smile to his monks, "I must now go and pray for a poor little woman who is in the pains of childbirth and suffers like a true daughter of Eve. She is down yonder in Ireland, and reckons upon my prayers, for she is my kinswoman, and of my mother's family." Upon this he hastened to the church, and when his prayer was ended returned to his brethren, saying — "She is delivered. The Lord Jesus, who deigned to be born of a woman, has come to her aid; this time she will not die."[233]

[232] "Sed nunc si alios juniores habes, ad me veniant, et quem ex eis elegerit Dominus regem, subito super meum irruit gremium . . . quibus accessis. . . . Echodius Buidhe adveniens in sinu ejus recubuit. Statimque sanctus eum osculatus benedixit." — Adamnan, i. 9. Columba had predicted that none of the four elder sons of the king should succeed him, and that they should all perish in war. The three eldest were actually killed in the battle for which Columba had rung the bells of his new monastery (see page 55), and the fourth also died sword in hand "in Saxonia bellica, in strage." The kings of Scotland, whose lineage is traced to the Dalriadians, were probably descendants of the fair-haired Hector.

[233] "A lectione surgit et subridens ait: Nunc ad oratorium mihi properandum est ut pro quadam misellula deprecer femina, quæ nunc in Hibernia nomen hujus inclamitans commemorat Columbæ, in magnis parturitionis, ut filia Evæ, difficillimæ torta punitionibus . . . quia et mihi cognationis est . . . de parentela matris meæ. . . . Ad ecclesiam currit. . . . Nunc propitius Dominus Jesus, de muliere progenitus, opportune miseræ subveniens, prospere prolem peperit; nec hac vice morietur. Eadem hora, nomen ejus invocans, absoluta salutem recuperavit. Ita ab aliquibus postea de Scotia et de eadem regione ubi mulier inhabitabat, transmeantibus, intimatum est.' — Adamnan, ii. 40.

He reconciles a pilot's wife with her husband.

Another day, while he was visiting an island on the Irish coast, a pilot came to him to complain of his wife, who had taken an aversion for him. The abbot called her and reminded her of the duties imposed upon her by the law of the Lord. "I am ready to do everything," said the woman — "I will obey you in the hardest things you can command. I do not draw back from any of the cares of the house. I will go even, if it is desired, on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, or I will shut myself up in a nunnery — in short, I will do everything except live with him."

The abbot answered that there could be no question of pilgrimage or of a convent so long as her husband lived; "but," he added, "let us try to pray God, all three, fasting — you, your husband, and myself."

"Ah," said the woman, "I know that you can obtain even what is impossible from God." However, his proposal was carried out — the three fasted, and Columba passed the whole night in prayer without ever closing his eyes. Next morning he said to the woman, with the gentle irony which he so often employed, "Tell me to what convent are you bound after your yesterday's projects?" "To none," said the woman; "my heart has been changed to-night. I know not how I have passed from hate to love." And from that day until the hour of her death she lived in a tender and faithful union with her husband.[234]

But Columba fortunately was connected with other households more united, where he could admire the happiness of his friends without feeling himself compelled to make peace. From his sanctuary at Iona his habitual solicitude and watchful sympathy followed them to their last hour. One day he was alone with one of the Saxons whom he had converted and attached to his community, and who was the baker of the monks; while this stranger prepared his bread, he heard

[234] "De quodam guberneta. . . . De sua querebatur uxore quæ . . . eum ad maritalem nullo modo admittebat concubitum. . . . Omnia quæcumque mihi præceperis, sum parata, quamlibet sint valde laboriosa, adimplere, excepto uno, ut me nullo modo in uno lecto dormire cum Lugneo. Omnem domus curam exercere non recuso, aut etiam si jubeas, maria transiens in aliquo puellarum monasterio permanere. . . . Scio quod tibi impossibile non erit ut ea quæ . . . vel impossibilia videmus, a Deo impetrata donentur. . . . Nocte subsequenti sanctus insomnis pro eis deprecatus est. . . . O femina, si, ut hesterna dicebas die, parata hodie es ad feminarum emigrare monasteriolum? . . . Nunc quem heri oderam, hodie amo: cor enim meum hac nocte præterita, quo modo ignoro, in me immutatum est de odio in amorem. . . . Anima ejusdem maritæ indissociabiliter in amore conglutinata est mariti, ut illa maritalis concubitus debita . . . nullo modo deinceps recusaret." — ADAMNAN, ii. 41.

the abbot say, looking up to heaven — "Oh! happy, happy woman! She goes into heaven with a guard of angels." Exactly a year after, the abbot and the Saxon baker were again together. "I see the woman," said Columba, "of whom I spoke to thee last year coming down from heaven to meet the soul of her husband, who has just died. She contends with powerful enemies for that dear soul, by the help of the holy angels: she gains the day, she triumphs, because her goodman has been a just man — and the two are united again in the home of everlasting consolation."[235]

This vision was preceded and followed by many others of the same description, in which the blessed death of many bishops and monks, his friends and contemporaries, were announced to him. They seem to have been intended to give him a glimpse of that heaven into which God was shortly to call him. Nor was it only at Iona that these supernatural graces were accorded to him, for he did not limit his unwearied activity to the narrow enclosure of that island, any more in the decline of his life than in the earlier period of his emigration. Up to old age he continued to have sufficient strength and courage to return to the most northern regions where he had preached the faith to the Picts; and it was in one of his last missionary journeys, when upon the banks of Loch Ness, to the north of the great line of waters which cuts Caledonia in two, at a distance of fifty leagues from Iona, that he was permitted to see the angels come to meet the soul of the old Pict, who, faithful during all his life to the law of nature, received baptism, and with it eternal salvation, from the great missionary's hands.[236]

At this period the angels, whom he saw carrying to heaven the soul of the just and penitent, and aiding the believing wife to make an entrance there for her husband, continually appeared to him and hovered about him. Making all possible allowance for the exaggerations and fables which the proverbial credulity of Celtic nations have added to the

[235] "Quidam religiosus frater, Genereus nomine, Saxo, pistor, opus pistorum exercens. . . . Felix mulier, felix bene morata, cujus animam nunc angeli Dei ad paradisum evehunt. . . . Ecce mulier, de qua te præsente dixeram præterito anno. Nunc mariti sui religiosi cujusdam plebeii in aere obviat animæ, et cum sanctis angelis contra æmulas pro eo belligerat potestates; quorum adminiculo ejusdem homuncionis justitia suffragante, a dæmoniacis belligerationibus erepta, ad æternæ refrigerationis locum anima ipsius est perducta." — ADAMNAN, iii. 10.

[236] See *ante*, page 50. "Ultra Britanniæ Dorsum iter agens, secus Nisæ fluminis lacum . . . sanctus senex." — *Ibid.*, iii. 14.

legends of their saints,[237] no Christian will be tempted to deny the verified narratives which bear witness, in Columba's case as well as in that of the other saints, to supernatural appearances which enriched his life, and especially his old age. Those wonderful soldiers of virtue and Christian truth needed such miracles to help them to support the toils and live through the trials of their dangerous mission. They required to ascend from time to time into celestial regions to find strength there for their continual struggle against all obstacles and perils and continually renewed temptations — and to learn to brave the enmities, the savage manners, and blind hatreds of the nations whom it was the aim of their lives to set free.

"Let no one follow me to-day," Columba said one morning with unusual severity to the assembled community: "I would be alone in the little plain to the west of the isle." He was obeyed: but a brother, more curious and less obedient than the rest, followed him far off, and saw him, erect and motionless, with his hands and his eyes raised to heaven, standing on a sandy hillock, where he was soon surrounded by a crowd of angels, who came to bear him company and to talk with him. The hillock has to this day retained the name of the Angels' Hill.[238] And the citizens of the celestial country, as they were called at Iona, came often to console and strengthen their future companion during the long winter nights which he passed in prayer in some retired corner, voluntarily exposed to all the torments of sleeplessness and cold.[239]

For as he approached the end of his career this great servant of God consumed his strength in vigils, fasts, and dan-

[237] Let us quote on this point, from the most illustrious of hagiographers, Bollandus himself, in his prefatory remarks to the life of the first Irish saint who came before him: "Multa continet admiranda portenta, sed usitata apud gentem illam simplicem et sanctam; neque sacris dogmatibus aut Dei erga electos suos suavissimæ providentiæ repugnantia; sunt tamen fortassis nonnulla imperitorum librariorum culpa vitiata aut amplificata. Quod in gentilium suorum rebus gestis animadverti oportere nos docuit Henricus Fitzsimon societatis nostræ theologus, egregio rerum usu præditus. . . . Satis est lectorem monuisse ut cum discretione ea legat quæ prodigiosa, et crebro similia miracula commemorant, nisi ab sapientibus scripta auctoribus sunt." — *Acta Sanctorum*, January, vol. i. p. 43.

[238] *Cnocan Aingel* (colliculus Angelorum), in the map of the island by Graham.

[239] "Cum ingenti animadversione dixit: Hodie . . . solus exire cupio, nemo itaque ex vobis me sequatur. . . . Cœlestis patriæ cives . . . sanctum virum orantem circumstare . . . albatis induti vestibus, et post aliquam sermocinationem cum beato viro. . . . Quantæ et quales ad beatum virum in hyemalibus plerumque noctibus insonuerunt, et in locis remotioribus, aliis quiescentibus, orantem, angelicæ fuerint et suaves frequentationes." — Adamnan, iii. 16.

gerous macerations. His life, which had been so full of generous struggles, hard trial, and toil in the service of God and his neighbor, seemed to him neither full enough nor pure enough. In proportion as the end drew near he redoubled his austerities and mortifications. Every night, according to one of his biographers, he plunged into cold water and remained there for the time necessary to recite an entire psalter.[240] One day, when, bent by age, he sought, perhaps in a neighboring island, a retirement still more profound than usual, in which to pray, he saw a poor woman gathering wild herbs and even nettles, who told him that her poverty was such as to forbid her all other food. Upon which the old abbot reproached himself bitterly that he had not yet come to that point. "See," he said, "this poor woman, who finds her miserable life worth the trouble of being thus prolonged; and we, who profess to deserve heaven by our austerities, we live in luxury!" When he went back to his monastery he gave orders that he should be served with no other food than the wild and bitter herbs with which the beggar supported her existence; and he severely reproved his minister, Diarmid,[241] who had come from Ireland with him, when he, out of compassion for his master's old age and weakness, threw a little butter into the caldron in which this miserable fare was cooked.[242]

A supernatural light surrounds him during his nocturnal work and prayers.

The celestial light which was soon to receive him began already to surround him like a garment or a shroud. His monks told each other that the solitary cell in the isle of Himba, near Iona, which he had built for himself, was lighted up every night by a great light, which could be seen through the chinks of the door and keyhole, while the abbot chanted unknown canticles till daybreak. After having remained

[240] O'Donnell, iii. 37. This incredible power of supporting cold in the damp and icy climate of the British Isles is one of the most marked features in the penances which the Irish saints inflicted on themselves. — See Colgan, *Acta SS. Hiberniæ*.

[241] MS. quoted by Reeves, p. 245, Appendix. The name of Diarmid or Diormid — the same as that of the king against whom Columba raised a civil war — was at a later date changed into that of Dermott, which is still to be found among the Irish.

[242] "Cum senio jam gravatus in quodam secessu ab aliis remotiori orationi vocali intentus deambularet. . . . Ecce paupercula hæc femina. . . . Et quid nos qui . . . laxius vivimus? . . . Diermitius . . . qui debebat eam miserlam escam parare . . . per fistulam instillatoriam modicum liquefacti butyri et ollæ . . . infudit. . . . Sic Christi miles ultimam senectutem in continua carnis macerations usque ad exitum . . . perduxit." — O'Donnell, *Vita Quinta*, iii. 32.

there three days and nights without food, he came out, full of joy at having discovered the mysterious meaning of several texts of Holy Scripture, which up to that time he had not understood.[243] When he returned to Iona to die, continuing faithful to his custom of spending a great part of the night in prayer, he bore about with him everywhere the miraculous light which already surrounded him like the nimbus of his holiness. The entire community was involuntarily agitated by the enjoyment of that foretaste of paradise. One winter's night, a young man who was destined to succeed Columba as fourth abbot of Iona remained in the church while the others slept: all at once he saw the abbot come in preceded by a golden light which fell from the heights of the vaulted roof, and lighted all the corners of the building, even including the little lateral oratory where the young monk hid himself in alarm.[244] All who passed during the night before the church, while their old abbot prayed, were startled by this light, which dazzled them like lightning.[245] Another of the young monks, whose education was specially directed by the abbot himself, resolved to ascertain whether the same illumination existed in Columba's cell: and notwithstanding that he had been expressly forbidden to do so, he got up in the night and went groping to the door of the cell to look in, but fled immediately, blinded by the light that filled it.[246]

These signs, which were the forerunners of his deliverance, showed themselves for several years towards the end of his life, which he believed and hoped was nearer its termination than it proved to be. But this remnant of existence, from which he sighed to be liberated, was held fast by the filial love of his disciples, and the ardent prayers of so many new Christian communities founded or ministered to

[243] "De qua domo immensæ claritatis radii, per rimulas valvarum et clavium foramina, erumpentes, noctu videbantur. Carmina quoque spiritalia et ante inaudita decantari ab eo audiebantur. . . . Scripturarum . . . quæque obscura et difficillima, plana et luce clarius aperta, mundissimi cordis oculis patebant." — ADAMNAN, iii. 18.

[244] "Simulque cum eo (ingreditur) aurea lux, de cœli altitudine descendens, totum illud ecclesiæ spatium replens . . . et penetrans usque in illius exedriolæ separatum conclave ubi se Virgnous in quantum potuit latitare conabatur . . . exterritus." — *Ibid*, iii. 19. Virgnous, or Fergna Brit, fourth abbot of Iona, from 605 to 625. He told this incident to his nephew, by whom it was told to Adamnan.

[245] "Fulguralis lux." — *Ibid*., iii. 20.

[246] "Cuidam suo sapientiam discenti alumno . . . qui, contra interdictum, in noctis silentio accessit . . . callide explorans . . . oculos ad clavium foramina posuit. . . . Repletum hospitiolum cœlestis splendore claritudinis, quam non sustinens intueri, aufugit." — *Ibid*, iii. 20.

by his zealous care. Two of his monks, one Irish and one Saxon, of the number of those whom he admitted to his cell to help him in his labor or to execute his instructions, saw him one day change countenance, and perceived in his face a sudden expression of the most contrary emotions: first a beatific joy, which made him raise to heaven a look full of the sweetest and tenderest gratitude; but a minute after this ray of supernatural joy gave place to an expression of heavy and profound sadness. The two spectators pressed him with questions which he refused to answer. At length they threw themselves at his knees and begged him, with tears, not to afflict them by hiding what had been revealed to him. "Dear children," he said to them, "I do not wish to afflict you. . . . Know, then, that it is thirty years to-day since I began my pilgrimage in Caledonia. I have long prayed God to let my exile end with this thirtieth year, and to recall me to the heavenly country. When you saw me so joyous, it was because I could already see the angels who came to seek my soul. But all at once they stopped short, down there upon that rock at the farthest limit of the sea which surrounds our island, as if they would approach to take me, and could not. And, in truth, they could not, because the Lord had paid less regard to my ardent prayer than to that of the many churches which have prayed for me, and which have obtained, against my will, that I should still dwell in this body for four years. This is the reason of my sadness. But in four years I shall die without being sick; in four years, I know it and see it, they will come back, these holy angels, and I shall take my flight with them towards the Lord." [247]

He takes leave of the monks at their work.

At the end of the four years thus fixed he arranged everything for his departure. It was the end of May, and it was his desire to take leave of the monks who worked in the fields in the only fertile part of Iona, the western side. His great age prevented him from walking, and he was drawn in a car by oxen. When he

[247] "Facies ejus subita, mirifica et lætifica hilaritate effloruit. . . . Incomparabili repletus gaudio, valde lætificabatur. Tum illa sapida et suavis lætificatio in mœstam convertitur tristificationem. . . . Duo . . . qui . . . ejus tugurioli ad januam stabant . . . illacrymati, ingemiseulantes. . . . Quia vos, ait, amo, tristificari nolo. . . . Usque in hunc præsentem diem, meæ in Britannia peregrinationis terdeni completi sunt anni. . . . Sed ecce nunc, subito retardati, ultra nostræ fretum insulæ stant in rupe . . . cum sanctis mihi obviaturis illo tempore, ad Dominum lætus emigrabo." — ADAMNAN, iii. 22.

reached the laborers he said to them, "I greatly desired to die a month ago, on Easter-day, and it was granted to me; but I preferred to wait a little longer, in order that the festival might not be changed into a day of sadness for you." And when all wept he did all he could to console them. Then turning towards the east, from the top of his rustic chariot he blessed the island and all its inhabitants — a blessing which, according to local tradition, was like that of St. Patrick in Ireland, and drove, from that day, all vipers and venomous creatures out of the island.[248]

He visits and blesses the monastic granary.

On Saturday in the following week he went, leaning on his faithful attendant Diarmid, to bless the granary of the monastery. Seeing there two great heaps of corn, the fruit of the last harvest, he said, "I see with joy that my dear monastic family, if I must leave them this year, will not at least suffer from famine." "Dear father," said Diarmid, "why do you thus sadden us by talking of your death?" "Ah, well," said the abbot, "here is a little secret which I will tell thee if thou wilt swear on thy knees to tell no one before I am gone. To-day is Saturday, the day which the Holy Scriptures call Sabbath or rest. And it will be truly my day of rest, for it shall be the last of my laborious life. This very night I shall enter into the path of my fathers. Thou weepest, dear Diarmid, but console thyself; it is my Lord Jesus Christ who deigns to invite me to rejoin Him; it is He who has revealed to me that my summons will come to night."[249]

His farewell to the old white horse.

Then he left the storehouse to return to the monastery, but when he had gone half-way stopped to rest at a spot which is still marked by one of the ancient crosses of Iona.[250] At this moment an ancient and faithful servant, the old white horse which had been em-

[248] "Ad visitandos fratres operarios senex senio fessus, plaustro vectus, pergit. . . . In occidua insulæ Ionæ laborantes parte . . . ut erat in vehiculo sedens, ad orientem suam convertens faciem, insulam cum insulanis benedixit habitatoribus. . . . Ex qua die, viperarum venena trisulcarum linguarum usque in hodiernam diem nullo modo aut homini aut pecori nocere potuere." — Adamnan, ii. 28, iii. 53.

[249] "Quod cum benedixisset et duos in eo frugum sequestratos acervos. . . . Valde congratulor meis familiaribus monachis, quia hoc etiam anno si a vobis emigrare me oportuerit, annum sufficientem habebitis. . . . Aliquem arcanum habeo sermusculum (*sic*). . . . Et mihi vere est sabbatum hæc hodierna dies . . . in qua post meas laborationum molestias sabbatizo. . . . Jam enim Dominus meus Jesus Christus me invitare dignatur." — *Ibid*, iii. 23.

[250] The monument called *Maclean's Cross*.

ployed to carry milk from the dairy daily to the monastery, came towards him. He came and put his head upon his master's shoulder, as if to take leave of him. The eyes of the old horse had an expression so pathetic that they seemed to be bathed in tears. Diarmid would have sent the animal away, but the good old man forbade him. "The horse loves me," he said, "leave him with me; let him weep for my departure. The Creator has revealed to this poor animal what he has hidden from thee, a reasonable man." Upon which, still caressing the faithful brute, he gave him a last blessing.[251] When this was done he used the remnants of his strength to climb to the top of a hillock from which he could see all the isle and the monastery, and there lifted up his hands to pronounce a prophetic benediction on the sanctuary he had created. "This little spot, so small and low, shall be greatly honored, not only by the Scots kings and people, but also by foreign chiefs and barbarous nations; and it shall be venerated even by the saints of other Churches."

After this he went down to the monastery, entered his cell, and began to work for the last time. He was then occupied in transcribing the Psalter. When he had come to the 33d Psalm and the verse, *Inquirentes autem Dominum non deficient omni bono*, he stopped short. "I must stop here," he said, "Baithen will write the rest." Baithen, as has been seen, was the steward of Iona, and was to become its abbot. After this the aged saint was present at the vigil service before Sunday in the church. When he returned to his cell he seated himself upon the naked stones which served the septuagenarian for bed and pillow, and which were shown for nearly a century near his tomb.[252] Then he

[251] "Media via ubi postea crux molari lapide infixa, hodieque stans . . . in margine cernitur viæ. . . . Senio fessus, paululum sedens. . . . Ecce albus occurrit caballus, obediens servitor . . . caput in sinu ejus ponens . . . dominum a se suum mox emigraturum . . . cœpit plangere uberumque quasi homo fundere et valde spumeas flere lacrymas. . . . Sine hunc, sine nostri amatorem, ut in hunc meum sinum fletus effundat amarissimi plangoris. . . . Mœstum a se equum benedixit ministratorem." — ADAMNAN, iii. 23.

[252] "Monticellum monasterio supereminentem ascendens, in vertice ejus paululum stans, elevatis manibus, benedixit cœnobium: Huic loco, quamlibet angusto et vili, non tantum Scotorum reges cum populis, sed etiam barbararum et exterarum gentium regnatores cum plebibus suis. . . . Sedebat in tugurio Psalterium scribens. . . . Post talem perscriptum versum paginæ, ad vespertinalem dominicæ noctis missam" (note this singular expression for *vigiles*) "ingreditur ecclesiam. Qua consummata, ad hospitiolum revertens, in lectulo residet pernox, ubi pro stramine nudam habebat petram et pro pulvillo lapidem, qui hodie quasi quidam juxta sepulcrum ejus titulus stat monumenti." — *Ibid*, iii. 23.

intrusted to his only companion a last message for the community: "Dear children, this is what I command with my last words—let peace and charity, a charity mutual and sincere, reign always among you! If you act thus, following the example of the saints, God who strengthens the just will help you, and I, who shall be near Him, will intercede on your behalf, and you shall obtain of Him not only all the necessities of the present life in sufficient quantity, but still more the rewards of eternal life, reserved for those who keep His law.[253]

These were his last words. As soon as the midnight bell had rung for the matins of the Sunday festival, he rose and hastened before the other monks to the church, where he knelt down before the altar. Diarmid followed him, but as the church was not yet lighted he could only find him by groping and crying in a plaintive voice, "Where art thou, my father?" He found Columba lying before the altar, and, placing himself at his side, raised the old abbot's venerable head upon his knees. The whole community soon arrived with lights, and wept as one man at the sight of their dying father. Columba opened his eyes once more, and turned them to his children on either side with a look full of serene and radiant joy. Then with the aid of Diarmid he raised, as best he might, his right hand to bless them all; his hand dropped, the last sigh came from his lips; and his face remained calm and sweet like that of a man who in his sleep had seen a vision of heaven.[254]

He dies in the church, 9th June, 597.

[253] "Hæc vobis, o filioli, novissima commendo verba, ut inter vos mutuam et non fictam habeatis charitatem, cum pace." — ADAMNAN, iii. 23.

[254] "Post quæ conticuit. . . . Vix media nocte pulsata personante clocca, festinus surgens ad ecclesiam pergit, citiorque ceteris currens, solus introgressus juxta altare. Diormitius ecclesiam ingrediens flebili ingeminat voce: Ubi es, pater? Et necdum allatis fratrum lucernis, per tenebras palpans, sanctum ante altarium recubantem invenit: quem paululum erigens et juxta sedens sanctum in suo gremio posuit caput. Et inter hæc cœtus monachorum cum luminaribus accurrens, patre viso moriente, cœpit plangere. Et, ut *ab aliquibus qui præsentes inerant didicimus*, sanctus, necdum egrediente animo, apertis sursum oculis, ad utrumque latus cum mira vultus hilaritate et lætitia circumspiciebat; sanctos scilicet obvios intuens angelos. Diormitius tum sanctam sublevat ad benedicendum sancti monachorum chorum dexteram manum. Sed et ipse venerabilis pater in quantum poterat, simul suam movebat manum. Et post sanctam benedictionem taliter significatam, continuo spiritum exhalavit. Facies rubens, et mirum in modum angelica visione exhilarata, in tantum remansit, ut non quasi mortui, sed dormientis videretur viventis." — ADAMNAN, iii. 23. The narrative of Adamnan is an almost literal reproduction of that of Cummian, the first known biographer of the saint.

Such was the life and death of the first great apostle of Great Britain. We have lingered, perhaps, too long on the grand form of this monk, rising up before us from the midst of the Hebridean sea, who, for the third part of a century, spread over those sterile isles, and gloomy distant shores, a pure and fertilizing light. In a confused age and unknown region he displayed all that is greatest and purest, and, it must be added, most easily forgotten in human genius: the gift of ruling souls by ruling himself.[255] To select the most marked and graphic incidents from the general tissue of his life, and those most fit to unfold that which attracts the modern reader — that is, his personal character and influence upon contemporary events — from a world of minute details having almost exclusive reference to matters supernatural or ascetical, has been no easy task. But when this is done, it becomes comparatively easy to represent to ourselves the tall old man, with his fine and regular features, his sweet and powerful voice, the Irish tonsure high on his shaven head, and his long locks falling behind, clothed with his monastic cowl, and seated at the prow of his coracle, steering through the misty archipelago and narrow lakes of the north of Scotland, and bearing from isle to isle and from shore to shore, light, justice, and truth, the life of the conscience and of the soul.

One loves above all to study the depths of that soul, and the changes which had taken place in it since its youth. No more than his namesake of Luxeuil, the monastic apostle of Burgundy, was he of the Picts and Scots a *Columba*. Gentleness was of all qualities precisely the one in which he failed the most. At the beginning of his life the future abbot of Iona showed himself still more than the abbot of Luxeuil to be animated by all the vivacities of his age, associated with all the struggles and discords of his race and country. He was vindictive, passionate, bold, a man of strife, born a soldier rather than a monk, and known, praised, and blamed as a soldier — so that even in his lifetime he was invoked in fight;[256] and continued a soldier, *insulanus miles*,[257] even upon the island rock from which he rushed forth to preach, convert, enlighten, reconcile, and reprimand both princes and nations, men and women, laymen and clerks.

[255] "Animarum dux," said the angel who announced his birth to his mother. This expression is also found in Adamnan (i. 2), but placed in the mouth of Columba, and applied by him to another saint.

[256] See *ante*, page 94, note.

[257] Adamnan, *Præfat.*

He was at the same time full of contradictions and contrasts — at once tender and irritable, rude and courteous, ironical and compassionate, caressing and imperious, grateful and revengeful — led by pity as well as by wrath, ever moved by generous passions, and among all passions fired to the very end of his life by two which his countrymen understand the best, the love of poetry and the love of country. Little inclined to melancholy when he had once surmounted the great sorrow of his life, which was his exile; little disposed even, save towards the end, to contemplation or solitude, but trained by prayer and austerities to triumphs of evangelical exposition; despising rest, untiring in mental and manual toil;[258] born for eloquence, and gifted with a voice so penetrating and sonorous that it was thought of afterwards as one of the most miraculous gifts that he had received of God;[259] frank and loyal, original and powerful in his words as in his actions — in cloister and mission and parliament, on land and on sea, in Ireland as in Scotland, always swayed by the love of God and of his neighbor, whom it was his will and pleasure to serve with an impassioned uprightness. Such was Columba. Besides the monk and missionary there was in him the makings of a sailor, soldier, poet, and orator. To us, looking back, he appears a personage as singular as he is lovable, in whom, through all the mists of the past and all the cross-lights of legend, the man may still be recognized under the saint — a man capable and worthy of the supreme honor of holiness, since he knew how to subdue his inclinations, his weakness, his instincts, and his passions, and to transform them into docile and invincible weapons for the salvation of souls and the glory of God.

[258] "Nullum etiam unius horæ intervallum transire poterat, quo non orationi, aut lectioni, vel scriptioni, vel etiam alicui operationi, incumberet. Jejunationum et vigilarum indefessis laboribus, sine ulla intermissione, die noctuque ita occupatus, ut supra humanam possibilitatem pondus uniuscujusque videretur specialis operis. Et inter hæc omnibus carus, hilarem semper faciem ostendens, spiritus sancti gaudio intimis lætificabatur præcordiis." — ADAMNAN, *Præf.* ii.

[259] "Ab expertis quibusdam de voce beati psalmodiæ viri indubitanter traditum est. Quæ vox in ecclesia cum fratribus decantatis, aliquando per quingentos passus . . . aliquando per mille incomparabiliter elevata modo audiebatur. Mirum dictu! Nec in auribus eorum qui secum in ecclesia stabant vox ejus modum humanæ vocis in clamoris granditate excedebat. . . . Similiter enim in auribus prope et longe audientium personabat." — *Ibid.*, i. 37. In another passage he calls it "sermone nitidus."

CHAPTER VIII.

SPIRITUAL DESCENDANTS OF ST. COLUMBA.

His posthumous glory: miraculous visions on the night of his death: rapid extension of his worship. — Note upon his supposed journey to Rome, and residence there, in search of the relics of St. Martin. — His solitary funeral and tomb at Iona. — His translation to Ireland, where he rests between St. Patrick and St. Bridget. — He is, like Bridget, feared by the Anglo-Norman conquerors. — John de Courcy and Richard Strongbow. — The *Vengeance of Columba*. — Supremacy of Iona over the Celtic churches of Caledonia and the north of Ireland. — Singular privilege and primacy of the abbot of Iona in respect to bishops. — The ecclesiastical organization of Celtic countries exclusively monastic. — Moderation and respect of Columba for the episcopal rank. — He left behind him no special rule. — That which he followed differed in no respect from the usual customs of the monastic order, which proves the exact observance of all the precepts of the Church, and the chimerical nature of all speculations upon the primitive Protestantism of the Celtic Church. — But he founded an order, which lasted several centuries under the title of the Family of Columb-Kill. — The clan and family spirit was the governing principle of Scottish monasticism. — Baithen and the eleven first successors of Columba at Iona were all members of the same race. — The two lines, lay and ecclesiastical, of the great founders. — The headquarters of the order transferred from Iona to Kells, one of Columba's foundations in Ireland. — The *Coarbs*. — Posthumous influence of Columba upon the Church of Ireland. — *Lex Columcille*. — Monastic Ireland in the seventh century the principal centre of Christian knowledge and piety. — Each monastery a school. — The transcription of manuscripts, which had been one of Columba's favorite occupations, continued and extended by his family even upon the continent. — Historic Annals. — The *Festiloge* of Angus the Culdee. — Note upon the Culdees, and upon the foundation of St. Andrews in Scotland. — Propagation of Irish monasticism abroad. — Irish saints and monasteries in France, Germany, and Italy. — The Irish saint Cathal venerated in Calabria under the name of *San Cataldo*. — Monastic university of Lismore: crowd of foreign students, especially of Anglo-Saxons, in Irish monasteries. — Confusion of temporal affairs in Ireland. — Civil wars and massacres. — Notes upon king-monks. — Patriotic intervention of the monks. — Adamnan, biographer and ninth successor of Columba, and his *Law of the Innocents*. — They are driven from their cloisters by the English. — Influence of Columba in Scotland. — Traces of the ancient Caledonian Church in the Hebrides. — Apostolical mission of Kentigern in the country between the Clyde and the Mersey. — His meeting with Columba. — His connection

with the king and queen of Strath-Clyde — Legend of the queen's ring. — Neither Columba nor Kentigern acted upon the Anglo-Saxons, who continued pagans, and maintained a threatening attitude. — The last bishops of conquered Britain desert their churches.

The influence of Columba, as of all men really superior to their fellows, and especially of the saints, far from ceasing with his life, went on increasing after his death. The supernatural character of his virtues, the miracles which were attributed to his intercession with God, had for a long time left scarcely any doubt as to his sanctity. It was universally acknowledged after his death, and has since remained uncontested among all the Celtic races. The visions and miracles which went to prove it would fill a volume. On the night, and at the very hour, of his death, a holy old man in a distant monastery in Ireland, one of those whom the Celtic chroniclers call the victorious soldiers of Christ,[260] saw with the eyes of his mind the isle of Iona, which he had never visited, flooded with miraculous light, and all the vault of heaven full of an innumerable army of shining angels, who went, singing celestial canticles, to bring away the holy soul of the great missionary. Upon the banks of a river,[261] in Columba's native land, another holy monk, while occupied with several others in fishing, saw, as also did his companions, the sky lighted up by a pillar of fire, which rose from earth to the highest heaven, and disappeared only after lighting up the whole scene with a radiance as of the sun at noon.[262]

Miraculous visions on the night of his death.

[260] "Sanctus senex, Christi miles . . . justus et sapiens . . . cuidam æque Christiano miniti . . . suam enarravit visionem. . . . Christi victor miles."

[261] The Finn, which, after having marked the boundary between the two countries of Tyrone and Donegal, throws itself into the Foyle, which flows by Derry.

[262] "Hac præterita nocte media, . . . et in hora beati exitus ejus Ionam insulam, ad quam corpore nunquam perveni, totam angelorum claritudine in spiritu vidi irradiatam, totaque spatia aeris usque ad æthera cœlorum eorumdem angelorum claritate illustrata; qui ad sane ipsius animam preferendam, de cœlis missi descenderunt innumeri. Altisona carminalia et valde suavia audivi angelicorum cœtuum cantica eodem momento egressionis inter angelicos sanctæ ipsius animæ ascendentes choros. . . . Ego et alii mecum viri laborantes in captura piscium in valle piscosi fluminis Fendæ subito totum aerei illustratum cœli spatium vidimus . . . et ecce, quasi quædam pergrandis ignea apparuit columna, quæ in illa nocte media sursum ascendens ita nobis videbatur mundum illustrare totum sicuti æsteus et meridianus sol, et postquam illa penetravit columna cœlum, quasi post occasum solis tenebræ succedunt. Non tantum nos . . . sed et alii multi piscatores, qui sparsim per diversas fluminales piscinas ejusdem fluminis piscabantur, sicut nobis post retulerunt, simili apparitione visa, magno pavore sunt perculsi." Adamnan takes pains to prove that he received the account of those nocturnal visions,

Thus began the long succession of wonders by which the worship of Columba's holy memory is characterized among the Celtic races. This worship, which seemed at one time concentrated in one of the smallest islets of the Atlantic, extended in less than a century after his death, not only throughout all Ireland and Great Britain, but into Gaul, Spain and Italy, and even to Rome,[263] which some legends, insufficiently verified, describe him as having visited during the last years of his life, in order to renew the bonds of respectful affection and spiritual union which are supposed to have united him to the great pope St. Gregory, who ascended the pontifical throne seven years before the death of the Hebridean apostle.[264]

Rapid extension of his worship even at Rome.

It was expected that all the population of the neighboring districts would hasten to Iona and fill the island during the funeral of the great

His funeral and his grave at Iona.

the first, from old monks at Iona, to whom it had been told by a hermit from Ireland; and the second, from the very monk who had directed the fishing on that memorable night.

[263] "Et hæc etiam eidem beatæ memoriæ viro a Deo non mediocris est collata gratia qua nomen ejus non tantum per totam nostram Scotiam et omnium totius orbis insularum maximam Britanniam, clare divulgari promeruit, in hac parva et extrema oceani Britannici commoratus (*sic*) insula; sed etiam ad trigonam usque Hispaniam, et Gallias, et ultra Alpes Penninas Italiam sitam pervenire, ipsam quoque Romanam civitatem, quæ caput est omnium civitatum." — ADAMNAN, *in finem*.

[264] According to an account given by Colgan (p. 473), the famous hymn *Altus Prosator* was composed by Columba while the envoys of St. Gregory the Great were at Iona, and was sent by him to the Pontiff, who listened to it standing up, in token of respect. We are obliged to acknowledge the same want of proof in the tradition which connects the holy abbot of Iona with the great wonder-worker of the Gauls, St. Martin, and which attributes to him a work similar to that of the great archbishop who, in our own days, has undertaken to restore to an honorable condition the profaned grave of his greatest predecessor, by rebuilding the basilica which covers that glorious sepulchre. According to the narrative of O'Donnell (book iii. c. 27), Columba, on his return from Rome, went to Tours to seek the gospel which had lain for a century upon the breast of St. Martin, and carried it to Derry, where this relic was exhibited up to the twelfth century. The people of Tours had forgotten the situation of St. Martin's grave; and when they begged Columba to find it for them, he consented, only on condition of being allowed to keep for himself everything found in St. Martin's tomb, except his bones. The legend adds that Columba left one of his disciples there, the same Mochonna who had followed him first to Iona, and that he afterwards became bishop of Tours. This alone is sufficient to disprove the narrative, since at the only period in the life of Columba at which this journey could have taken place, the bishop of Tours was St. Gregory the historian, whose predecessor and successor are well known. Let us remark, at the same time, the curious traditional ties between the Church of Tours and that of Ireland, which lasted for several centuries. St. Patrick, the apostle of Ireland, is supposed to have been the grand-nephew of St. Martin, and to have been encouraged by him in his mission.

abbot; and this had even been intimated to him before he died. But he had prophesied that the fact would be otherwise, and that his monastic family alone should perform the ceremonies of his burial. And it happened, accordingly, during the three days which were occupied with those rites, that a violent wind made it impossible for any boat to reach the island. Thus this friend and counsellor of princes and nations, this great traveller, this apostle of an entire nation which, during a thousand years, was to honor him as its patron saint, lay solitary upon his bier, in the little church of his island retirement; and his burial was witnessed only by his monks. But his grave, though it was not dug in presence of an enthusiastic crowd, as had been looked for, was not the less visited and surrounded by floods of successive generations, who for more than two hundred years crowded there to venerate the relics of the holy missionary, and to drink the pure waters of his doctrine and example at the fountain-head.

The remains of Columba rested here in peace up to the ninth century, until the moment when Iona, like all the British isles, fell a prey to the ravages of the Danes. These cruel and insatiable pirates seem to have been attracted again and again by the wealth of the offerings that were lavished upon the tomb of the apostle of Caledonia. They burnt the monastery for the first time in 801; again in 805, when it contained only so small a number as sixty-four monks; and finally, a third time, in 877. To save from their rapacity a treasure which no pious liberality could replace, the body of St. Columba was carried to Ireland. And it is the unvarying tradition of Irish annals that it was deposited finally at Down, in an episcopal monastery not far from the western shore of the island, between the great Monastery of Bangor on the north, from which came Columbanus of Luxeuil, and Dublin, the future capital of Ireland, to the south. There already lay the relics of Patrick and of Bridget; and thus was verified one of the prophecies in Irish verse attributed to Columba, in which he says

Removal of his remains to Down, in Ireland, where they were laid by those of Patrick and of Bridget.

> "They shall bury me first at Iona;
> But, by the will of the living God,
> It is at Dun that I shall rest in my grave,
> With Patrick and with Bridget the immaculate.
> Three bodies in one grave." [265]

[265] See REEVES, pp. lxxix. 313, 317, 462; compare COLGAN, p. 446. These

The three names have remained since that time inseparably united in the dauntless heart and fervent tenacious memory of the Irish people. It is to Columba that the oppressed and impoverished Irish seem to have appealed with the greatest confidence in the first English conquest in the twelfth century. The conquerors themselves feared him, not without reason, for they had learned to know his vengeance. John de Courcy, a warlike Anglo-Norman baron, he who was called the Conqueror (*Conquestor*) of Ulster, as William of Normandy of England, carried always with him the volume of Columba's prophecies;[266] and when the bodies of the three saints were found in his new possessions in 1180, he prayed the Holy See to celebrate their translation by the appointment of a solemn festival. Richard Strongbow, the famous Earl of Pembroke, who had been the first chief of the invasion, died of an ulcer in the foot which had been inflicted upon him, according to the Irish narrative, at the prayer of St. Bridget, St. Columba, and other saints, whose churches he had destroyed. He himself said, when at the point of death, that he saw the sweet and noble Bridget lift her arm to pierce him to the heart. Hugh de Lacy, another Anglo-Norman chief of great lineage, perished at Durrow, "by the vengeance of Columb-cille," says a chronicler, while he was engaged in building a castle to the injury of the abbey which Columba had founded, and loved so much.[267] A century after, this *vengeance* was still popularly dreaded; and some English pirates, who had pillaged his church in the island of Inchcolm, having sunk like lead in sight of land, their countrymen said that he should be called, not St. Columba, but St. *Quhalme*[268] — that is to say, the saint of Sudden Death.

Columba feared by the Anglo-Norman barons.

A nation has special need to believe in these vengeances of God, always so tardy and infrequent, and which, in Ireland, above all, have scarcely sufficed to light with a fugitive gleam the long night of the conquest, with all its iniquities

three bodies were found at Down in 1185, after the disasters of the first English conquest, and again united in one tomb by the bishop Malachi, and by John de Courcy, one of the great Anglo-Norman barons, conqueror (*conquestor*, according to the office) of Ulster. A special holiday was instituted by the Holy See in memory of this translation. The office for this festival, printed first at Paris in 1620, has been given by Colgan at the beginning of his precious work, *Trias Thaumaturga*.

[266] KELLEY, note to LYNCH, *Cambrensis Eversus*, vol. i. p. 386.

[267] O'DONOVAN'S *Four Masters*, vol. i. pp. 25, 75.

[268] *Quhalme* in Anglo-Saxon meant sudden death, from whence the modern English word *qualm*.

and crime. Happy are the people among whom the everlasting justice of the appeal against falsehood and evil is placed under the shadow of God and the saints; and blessed also the saints who have left to posterity the memory of their indignation against all injustice.

As long as the body of Columba remained in his island grave, Iona, consecrated henceforward by the life and death of so great a Christian, continued to be the most venerated sanctuary of the Celts. For two centuries she was the nursery of bishops, the centre of education, the asylum of religious knowledge, the point of union among the British isles, the capital and necropolis of the Celtic race. Seventy kings or princes were buried there at the feet of Columba, faithful to a kind of traditional law, the recollection of which has been consecrated by Shakespeare [269] During these two centuries, she retained an uncontested supremacy over all the monasteries and churches of Caledonia, as over those of half Ireland; [270] and we shall hereafter see how she disputed with the Roman missionaries the authority over the Anglo-Saxons of the north. Later still, if we are permitted to follow this narrative so far, at the end of the eleventh century, we shall see her ruins raised up and restored to monastic life by one of the most noble and touching heroines of Scotland and Christendom, the holy Queen Margaret, the gentle and noble exile, so beautiful, so wise, so magnanimous and beloved, who used her influence over Malcolm her husband only for the regeneration of the Church in his kingdom, and whose dear memory is worthy of being associated in the heart of the Scottish people with that of Columba, since she obtained by his intercession that grace of maternity which has made her the origin of the dynasty which still reigns over the British Isles.[271]

[269] "Rosse. Where is Duncan's body?
Macduff. Carried to Colmes-Kill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones."
Shakespeare. *Macbeth.*

[270] "Plurima exinde monasteria per discipulos ejus in Britannia et in Hibernia propagata sunt: in quibus omnibus idem monasterium insulanum, in quo ipse requiescit corpore, principatum tenet."—Bede, iii. 4. "Cujus monasterium in cunctis pene septentrionalium Scotorum et omnium Pictorum monasteriis non parvo tempore arcem tenebat regendisque eorum populis præerat."—*Ibid.*, iii. 3.

[271] Orderic Vital, l. viii. 702; Fordun, *Scotichronicon*, v. 37. On the summit of the picturesque rock upon which Edinburgh Castle is built, may still be seen the chapel dedicated to St. Margaret, recently restored by order of the Queen. She is the Christian Minerva of that Acropolis of the North.

Let us here reconsider the privilege which gave to the abbots of Iona a sort of jurisdiction over the bishops of the neighboring districts[272] — a privilege unique, and which would even appear fabulous, if it were not attested by two of the most trustworthy historians of the time, the Venerable Bede and Notker of St. Gall. In order to explain this strange anomaly it must be understood that in Celtic countries, especially in Ireland and in Scotland, ecclesiastical organization rested, in the first place, solely upon conventual life. Dioceses and parishes were regularly constituted only in the twelfth century. Bishops, it is true, existed from the beginning, but either without any clearly fixed territorial jurisdiction, or incorporated as a necessary but subordinate part of the ecclesiastical machinery with the great monastic bodies; and such was specially the case in Ireland. It is for this reason that the bishops of the Celtic Church, as has been often remarked, are so much overshadowed not only by great founders and superiors of monasteries, such as Columba, but even by simple abbots.[273] Nevertheless, it is evident that during the life of Columba, far from assuming any superiority whatever over the bishops who were his contemporaries, he showed them the utmost respect, even to such a point that he would not celebrate mass in the presence of a bishop who had come, humbly disguised as a simple convert, to visit the community of Iona.[274] At the same time the

[272] "Habet insula rectorem semper abbatem presbyterum, cujus jura omnis provincia, et ipsi etiam episcopi, ordine inusitato, debeant esse subjecti." — Bede, l. iii. 4. Compare *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ad an. 565, ed. Giles. "In Scotia insula Hibernia depositio sancti Columbæ, cognomento apud suos Columb-Killi, eo quod multarum cellarum, id est monasteriorum vel ecclesiarum institutor, fundator et rector exstiterit: adeo ut abbas monasterii, cui novissime præfuit et ubi requiescit, contra morem ecclesiasticum primus omnium Hibernensium habeatur episcoporum." — Notker Balbulus, *Martyrologium*. Mabillon quotes the charter of the Irish Abbey of Honau in Germany, where the signature of the abbot precedes those of seven bishops, all bearing Celtic names. — *Annales Benedictini*, vol. ii. Appendix, p. 70. Who were the bishops subject to the primacy of Iona? If Colgan is to be believed — in *Præf.*, *Triad. Thaum.*, "prærogativo forte jurisdictioni legimus concessum, quod ejus abbas primatum et præcedentiam habeat ante omnes Scotorum episcopos" — it must be supposed that all the bishops of Ireland and Scotland were under its authority.

[273] See the curious incident narrated by Adamnan (i. 36), where a bishop hesitated to confer the priesthood on Aidus the Black before having the authority of the abbot of Tiree, an insular *cella* dependent upon Iona. — "Episcopus non ausus est super caput ejus manum imponere, nisi prius presbyter Findchanus . . . suam capiti ejus pro confirmatione imponeret dextram."

[274] "Quidam proselytus ad sanctum venit qui se in quantum potuit occultabat humiliter, ut nullus sciret quod esset episcopus." — Adamnan, i. 44.

abbots scrupulously abstained from all usurpation of the rank, privileges, or functions reserved to bishops, to whom they had recourse for all the ordinations celebrated in the monasteries.[275] But as most of the bishops had been educated in monastic schools, they retained an affectionate veneration for their cradle, which, in regard to Iona especially, from which we shall see so many bishops issue, might have translated itself into a sort of prolonged submission to the conventual authority of their former superior. Five centuries later the bishops who came from the great French abbeys of Cluny and Citeaux took pleasure in professing the same filial subordination to their monastic birthplace.

The uncontested primacy of Iona over the bishops who had there professed religion, or who came there to be consecrated after their election, may be besides explained by the influence exercised by Columba over both clergy and people of the districts evangelized by him — an influence which was only increased by his death.

Was Columba the author of a special rule?

Did the great abbot of Iona, like his namesake of Luxeuil, leave to his disciples a monastic rule of his own, distinct from that of other Celtic monasteries? This has been often asserted, but without positive proof — and in any case no authentic text of such a document exists.[276] That which bears the name of the *Rule of Columbkill*, and which has been sometimes attributed to him, has no reference in any way to the cenobites of Iona, and is only applicable to hermits or recluses, who lived perhaps under his authority, but isolated, and who were always very numerous in Ireland.[277]

[275] "Accito episcopo . . . apud supradictum Findchanum presbyter ordinatus est." — ADAMNAN. i. 36.

[276] Colgan (*Trias Thaum.*. p. 471) and Hœften (*Disquisitiones Monasticæ*, 1. i. tr. 8. p. 84) had in their hands the text of a rule attributed to Columba, and reprinted by Reeves in 1850, but both have acknowledged that it would be applicable only to anchorites. — O'CURRY, *Lectures*, pp. 374, 612. The only proof of the existence of a cenobitical rule originated by Columba, is the mention made of it by Bede in the address of Wilfrid at the celebrated conference of Whitby between the Benedictines and the Celtic monks, which will be discussed hereafter: "De Patre Vestro Columba et sequacibus ejus, quorum sanctitatem vos imitari et *Regulam* ac præcepta cœlestibus signis confirmata." The word *Regula*, however, which occurs so often in the lives of the Irish saints, can scarcely mean anything more than *observance, discipline;* each considerable saint had his own. Reeves has proved that the *Ordo monasticus*, attributed to Columba by the last edition of Holsteinus, does not go farther back than to the twelfth century.

[277] The recluses or anchorites, who passed their life in a little cell containing an altar, at which to say mass, sometimes solitary, sometimes attached to their church (like that of Marianus Scotus at Fulda), existed for a very

A conscientious and attentive examination of all the monastic peculiarities which can be discovered in his biography [278] reveals absolutely nothing in respect to observances or obligations different from the rules borrowed by all the religious communities of the sixth century from the traditions of the Fathers of the Desert. Such an examination brings out distinctly in the first place, the necessity for a vow [279] or solemn profession to prove the final admission of the monk into the community after a probation more or less prolonged; and, in the second place, the absolute conformity of the monastic life of Columba and his monks to the precepts and rites of the Catholic Church in all ages. Authorities unquestionable and unquestioned demonstrate the existence of auricular confession, the invocation of saints, the universal faith in their protection and intervention in temporal affairs, the celebration of the mass, the real presence in the Eucharist, ecclesiastical celibacy, fasts and abstinences, prayer for the dead, the sign of the cross, and, above all, the assiduous and profound study of the Holy Scriptures.[280] Thus the assumption made by certain writers of having found in the Celtic Church some sort of primitive Christianity not Catholic, crumbles to the dust; and the ridiculous but inveterate prejudice which accuses our fathers of having ignored or interdicted the study of the Bible is once again proved to be without foundation.

As to the customs peculiar to the Irish Church, and which were afterwards the cause of so many tedious struggles with the Roman and Anglo-Saxon missionaries, no trace of them is to be discovered in the acts or words of Columba. There

long time in Ireland. Sir Henry Piers has proved the existence of one of these recluses, and described his cell in the county of Westmeath in 1682. — REEVES, *Memory of the Church of St. Duilech*, 1859.

[278] See the Appendix N to the volume of Reeves, entitled *Institutio Hyensis*. It is an excellent epitome of all the monastic customs of the period.

[279] "Votum monachiale voverunt . . . votum monachicum devotus vovit." — ADAMNAN, i. 31, ii. 39.

[280] To prove our assertion we indicate several passages from Adamnan:

Auricular Confession is expressly pointed out in the history of Libranus, ii. 39.

The Invocation of Saints at each page. Columba is even invoked during his life. Their protection and intervention in temporal affairs, ii. 5, 15, 39, 40.

The celebration of festivals and offices in their honor.

The *real presence* — All the elements of the Eucharist. "A sancto jussus Christi corpus conficere. . . . Eucharistiæ mysteria celebrare pro anima sancta." — COLGAN, *Vita Prima*, c. 8; ADAMNAN, iii. 12.

Solemn mass on Sunday, iii. 12; on other days, i. 40.

is no mention of the tiresome disputes about the tonsure, or even of the irregular celebration of Easter, except perhaps in a prophecy vaguely made by him on the occasion of a visit to Clonmacnoise, upon the discords which this difference of opinion in respect to Easter would one day excite in the Scotic Church.[281]

Order founded by Columba.

His successors.

If Columba made no rule calculated, like that of St Benedict, to last for centuries, he nevertheless left to his disciples a spirit of life, of union, and of discipline, which was sufficient to maintain in one great body, for several centuries after his death, not only the monks of Iona, but the numerous communities which had gathered round them. This monastic body bore a noble name; it was long called the Order of the Fair Company,[282] and still longer the Family of Columb-kill. It was governed by abbots, who succeeded Columba as superiors of the community of Iona. These abbots proved themselves worthy of, and obtained from Bede, one of the most competent of judges, who began to write a hundred years after the death of Columba, a tribute of admiration without reserve, and even more striking than that which he gave to their founder: — "Whatever he may have been," said the Venerable Bede, with a certain shadow of Anglo-Saxon suspicion in respect to Celtic virtue and sanctity, "it is undeniable that he has left successors illustrious by the purity of their life, their great love of God, and their zeal for monastic order; and, although separated from us as to the observance of Easter, which is caused by their distance from all the rest of the world, ardently and closely devoted to the observance of those laws of piety and chastity which they have learned in the Old and New Testaments."[283] These praises are justified by the great number of saints who have issued from the spiritual lineage of Columba;[284] but they should be specially applied to his successors in the abbatial see of Iona, and, in the first place, to his first successor, whom he had himself pointed out, the holy and amiable Baithen, who

[281] Adamnan, i. 3.

[282] "Cujus ordo dicebatur pulchræ societatis." — *Vita Sancti Kierani*, apud Heeften, *op. cit.*, pp. 61, 64.

[283] "Qualiscunque fuerit ipse, nos hoc de illo certum tenemus, quia reliquit, successores magna continentia et divino amore regulæque monasticæ insignes . . . pietatis et castitatis opera diligenter observantes." — Bede, iii. 4.

[284] The number may be seen in Colgan, who names as many as a hundred and twelve, the most part of whom are commemorated in the Irish martyrologies.

was so worthy to be his lieutenant and friend, and could so well replace him. He survived Columba only three years, and died on the anniversary of his master's death.[285] The cruel sufferings of his last illness did not prevent him from praying, writing, and teaching to his last hour. Baithen was, as has been said, the cousin-german of Columba, and almost all the abbots of Iona who succeeded him were of the same race.

Preponderance of the clan in the constitution of Celtic monachism.

The family spirit, or, to speak more truly, the clan spirit, always so powerful and active in Ireland, and which was so striking a feature in the character of Columba, had become a predominating influence in the monastic life of the Celtic Church. It was not precisely hereditary succession, since marriage was absolutely unknown among the regular clergy; but great influence was given to blood in the election of abbots, as in that of princes or military leaders. The nephew or cousin of the founder or superior of a monastery seemed the candidate pointed out by nature for the vacant dignity. Special reasons were necessary for breaking through this rule. Thus it is apparent that the eleven first abbots of Iona after Columba, proceeded, with the exception of one individual, from the same stock as himself, from the race of Tyrconnel, and were all descended from the same son of Niall of the Nine Hostages, the famous king of all Ireland.[286] Every great monastery became thus the centre and appanage of a family, or, to speak more exactly, of a clan, and was alike the school and the asylum of all the founder's kindred. At a later period a kind of succession, purely laic and hereditary, developed itself by the side of the spiritual posterity, and was invested with the possession of most of the monastic domains. These two lines of descendants, simultaneous but distinct, from the principal monastic founders, are distinguished in the historical genealogies of Ireland under the names of *ecclesiastica progenies* and of *gentilis progenies*.[287]

[285] During his short abbacy, it is apparent that all was not unanimous adhesion and enthusiasm. A certain Bevan, described as a persecutor of the Churches, once sent to ask the remains of the meal which the monks of Iona had just eaten, in order to turn them into derision. "Nec ob aliud hoc postulabat, nisi ut causam blasphemiæ ac despectionis fratrum inveniret.' Baithen sent to him what remained of the milk which had made the repast of the brethren. After he had drunk it, the scoffer was seized with such suffering, that he was converted, and died confessing his repentance. — Act. SS. Bolland., vol. ii. June, p. 238.

[286] See the genealogical table given by Dr. Reeves, at page 313 of his edition of Adamnan.

[287] Dr. Reeves has thoroughly examined this curious question in a special

After the ninth century, in consequence of the relaxation o discipline, the invasion of married clerks, and the increasing value of land, the line of spiritual descent confounded itself more and more with that of natural inheritance, and there arose a crowd of abbots purely lay and hereditary, as proud of being the collateral descendants of a holy founder, as they were happy to possess the vast domains with which the foundation had been gradually enriched. This fatal abuse made its appearance also in France and Germany, but was less inveterate than in Ireland, where it still existed in the time of St Bernard; and in Scotland, where it lasted even after the Reformation.

It was never thus at Iona, where the abbatical succession was always perfectly regular and uninterrupted up to the invasions and devastations of the Danes at the commencement of the ninth century. From the time of those invasions the abbots of Iona began to occupy an inferior position. The radiant centre from which Christian civilization had shone upon the British Isles grew dim.[288] The headquarters of the communities united under the title of the *Family* or *Order of Columb-kill*, were transferred from Iona to one of the other foundations of the saint at Kells, in the centre of Ireland, where a successor of Columba, superior-general of the order, titulary abbot of Iona, Armagh, or some other great Irish monastery, and bearing the distinctive title of *Coarb*, resided for three centuries more.[289]

We have lingered too long over the great and touching figure of the saint whose life we have just recorded. And it now remains to us to throw a rapid glance at the influence which he exercised on all around him, and even upon posterity.

paper, *On the Ancient Abbatial Succession in Ireland*, ap. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, vol. vii., 1857.

[288] Magnus, king of Norway, after having conquered the Hebrides, visited Iona in 1097, and annexed the islands to the bishopric of Sodor and Man (*Sodorensis*), under the metropolitan of Drontheim, which destroyed the ancient ecclesiastical tradition in the island. In 1203, an abbot of Iona, who came from Ireland, and belonged to the family of Columba, is mentioned for the last time. In 1214, there is mention of a priory of the order of Cluny, the origin of which is unknown. — LANIGAN, vol. iv. p. 347; COSMO INNES, p. 110. The temporal sovereignty fell to the famous *Lords of the Isles*, immortalized by Walter Scott, and whose tombs may still be seen there. — See Appendix A.

[289] See the detailed chronology of the forty-nine successors of Columba, and of their arts and laws, from 597 to 1219, in the *Chronicon Hyense* of Reeves, from page 359. These Coarbs have been strangely confounded by Ussher, Ware, Lanigan, and other writers, with the *chorepiscopi* of the continent.

This influence is especially evident in the Irish Church, which seems to have been entirely swayed by his spirit, his successors, and his disciples, during the time which is looked upon as the Golden Age in its history, and which extends up to the period of the Danish invasions, at the end of the eighth century. During all this time the Irish Church, which continued, as from its origin, entirely monastic, seems to have been governed by the recollections or institutions of Columba. The words *Lex Columbcille* are found on many pages of its confused annals, and indicate sometimes the mass of traditions preserved by its monasteries, sometimes the tributes which the kings levied for the defence of the Church and country, while carrying through all Ireland the shrine which contained his relics.[290] The continued influence of the great abbot of Iona was so marked, even in temporal affairs, that more than two centuries after his death, in 817, the monks of his order, *Congregatio Columbcille*, went solemnly to Tara, the ancient capital of Druidical Ireland, to excommunicate there the supreme monarch of the island, who had assassinated a prince of the family of their holy chief.[291]

Posthumous influence of Columba upon the Irish Church.

Lex Columbcille.

It has been said, and cannot be sufficiently repeated, that Ireland was then regarded by all Christian Europe as the principal centre of knowledge and piety. In the shelter of its numberless monasteries a crowd of missionaries, doctors, and preachers were educated for the service of the Church and the propagation of the faith in all Christian countries. A vast and continual development of literary and religious effect[292] is there apparent, superior to anything that could be seen in any other country of Europe. Certain arts — those of architecture, carving, metallurgy, as applied to the decoration of churches — were successfully cultivated, without speaking of music, which continued to flourish both among the learned and among the people. The classic languages — not only Latin but Greek — were cultivated, spoken, and written with a sort of passionate pedantry, which shows at least how powerful was the sway of intellectual influences over these ardent souls. Their mania for Greek was even carried so far that they wrote the Latin of the church books

Great intellectual development of the Irish monasteries.

[290] This occurred in 753, 757, and 778.

[291] *Annals of Ulster*, ann. 817.

[292] "Scripturarum tam liberalium quam ecclesiasticarum."

in Hellenic characters.[293] And in Ireland more than anywhere else, each monastery was a school, and each school a workshop of transcription, from which day by day issued new copies of the Holy Scriptures and the Fathers of the primitive Church — copies which were dispersed through all Europe, and which are still to be found in Continental libraries. They may easily be recognized by the original and elegant character of their Irish writing, as also by the use of the alphabet common to all the Celtic races, and afterwards employed by the Anglo-Saxons, but to which in our day the Irish alone have remained faithful. Columba, as has been seen, had given an example of this unwearied labor to the monastic scribes; his example was continually followed in the Irish cloisters, where the monks did not entirely limit themselves to the transcription of Holy Scripture, but reproduced also Greek and Latin authors, sometimes in Celtic character, with gloss and commentary in Irish, like that Horace which modern learning has discovered in the library of Berne.[294] These marvellous manuscripts, illuminated with incomparable ability and patience by the monastic family of Columba, excited, five hundred years later, the declamatory enthusiasm of a great enemy of Ireland, the Anglo-Norman historian, Gerald de Barry; and they still attract the attention of archæologists and philologists of the highest fame.[295]

Calligraphy in imitation of Columba.

Exact annals of the events of the time were also made out in all the monasteries. These annals replaced the chronicles of the bards; and so far as they have been preserved, and already published or about to be so,

Historic annals.

[293] REEVES's *Adamnan*, pp. 158, 354. In a MS. life of St. Brendan this curious passage occurs: "Habebat . . . missalem librum scriptum Græcis litteris. . . . Et positus est ille liber super altare. . . . Illico jam litteras Græcas scivit sanctus Brendanus, sicuti Latinas quas didicit ab infantia. Et cœpit missam cantare."

[294] Orelli, in his edition of Horace, says that this Codex of Berne, with its Irish gloss, is of the eighth or ninth century: "*Scotice scriptus*, antiquissimus omnium quotquot adhuc innotuerunt."

[295] "Hæc equidem quanto frequentius et diligentius intueor, semper quasi novis obstupeo, semperque magis et magis admiranda conspicio." — GIRALDUS CAMBRENSIS, *Topogr. Iiber.*, ii. c. 38. Most of these admired and quoted MSS. in Continental or Anglo-Saxon libraries, are of Irish origin, as has been proved by Zeuss, Keller, and Reeves. The MSS. used by the celebrated philologist Zeuss in the composition of his *Grammatica Celtica* (Lipsiæ, 1853) contain Irish glosses upon the Latin text of Priscian, at St. Gall, on St. Paul's epistles, at Wurzburg, on the commentary of St. Columbanus upon the Psalms, which has been brought from Bobbio to Milan, and on Bede, brought from Reichenau to Carlsruhe.

they now form the principal source of Irish history.[296] Ecclesiastical records have naturally a greater place in them than civil history. They celebrate especially the memory of the saints, who have always been so numerous in the Irish Church, where each of the great communities can count a circle of holy men, issued from its bosom or attached to its confraternity. Under the name of *sanctilogy* or *festilogy* (for martyrs were too little known in Ireland to justify the usual term of martyrology), this circle of biographies was the spiritual reading of the monks, and the familiar instruction of the surrounding people. Several of these *festilogies* are in verse, one of which, the most famous of all, is attributed to Angus, called the *Culdee*, a simple brother, miller of the Monastery of Tallach.[297] In this the principal saints of other countries find a place along with three hundred and sixty-five Irish saints, one for each day of the year, who were all celebrated with that pious and patriotic enthusiasm, at once poetical and moral, which burns so naturally in every Irish heart.

Angus, the Culdee.

The name of Culdee leads us to point out in passing the absurd and widespread error which has made the Culdees be looked upon as a kind of monkish order, married and indigenous to the soil, which existed before the introduction of Christianity into Ireland and Scotland by the Roman missionaries, and of whom the great abbot of Iona was the founder or chief. This opinion, propagated by learned Anglicans, and blindly copied by various French writers, is now universally acknowledged as false by sincere and competent judges.[298] The Culdees, a sort of third

The Culdees.

[296] These precious collections were continued by the more recent Orders after the English conquest, and even after the Reformation, up to the seventeenth century. See especially the valuable collection entitled *Annals of the Four Masters*, that is to say, of the four Franciscans of Donegal, which come down to 1634.

[297] See the analysis made of it by O'Curry, *Lectures*, &c., pp. 364, 371, and, after him, M. de la Villemarqué in his *Poésie des Cloîtres Celtiques*.

[298] According to Dr. Reeves, the name of *Culdee* or *Ceile Dei*, answering to the Latin term *Servus Dei*, appeared for the first time in authentic history with the name of this Angus, who lived in 780. It was afterwards applied to the general body of monks, that is to say, to all the clerks living under a monastic rule in Ireland and Scotland. According to the lamented O'Curry, the Culdees were nothing more than ecclesiastics or laymen, attached to the monasteries, and whose first founder was a St. Malruain, who died in 787 or 792. This information, which the author has derived from the two princes of Irish erudition, agrees perfectly with the conclusions of Dr. Lanigan in his very learned and impartial ecclesiastical history of Ireland, vol. iv. p. 295–300; as also with those of the new Bollandists, vol. viii. of October, p. 86, *Disquisitio in Culdeos*, ap. Acta S. Reguli. According to the worthy con-

order, attached to the regular monasteries, appeared in Ireland, as elsewhere, only in the ninth century, and had never anything more than a trifling connection with the Columban communities.[299]

Missionary efforts of the Irish monks out of Ireland.

Still more striking than the intellectual development of which the Irish monasteries were at this period the centre, is the prodigious activity displayed by the Irish monks in extending and multiplying themselves over all the countries of Europe — here to create new schools and sanctuaries among nations already evangelized — there to carry the light of the Gospel, at peril of their lives, to the countries that were still pagan. We should run the risk of forestalling our future task if we did not resist the temptations of the subject, which would lead us to go faster than time, and to follow those armies of brave and untiring Celts, always adventurous and often heroic, into the regions where we shall perhaps one day find them again. Let us content ourselves with a simple list, which has a certain eloquence even in the dryness of its figures. Here is the number, probably very incomplete, given by an ancient writer, of the monasteries founded out of Ireland by Irish monks, led far from their country by the love of souls, and, no doubt, a little also by that love of travel which has always been one of their special distinctions: —

Thirteen in Scotland,
Twelve in England,
Seven in France,
Twelve in Armorica,
Seven in Lorraine,
Ten in Alsatia,
Sixteen in Bavaria,
Fifteen in Rhetia, Helvetia, and Allemania;

tinuators of the *Acta Sanctorum*, the Culdees were not monks, but secular brothers, or rather canons, and appeared at soonest in the year 800. At the same time our learned contemporaries remit to the ninth century that translation of the relics of the apostle St. Andrew, who became the patron saint of Scotland in the middle ages, which the legends have attributed to the fourth or sixth. This translation, made by a bishop named Regulus (Rule), occasioned the foundation of the episcopal see and town of St. Andrews on the east coast of Scotland, in the county of Fife, which was made metropolis of the kingdom in 1472, and possesses a university, which dates from 1411. Very fine ruins of the churches destroyed by the Reformers in 1559 are still to be seen there. Since the preceding note was written, a new publication, by Dr. Reeves, *The Culdees of the British Islands as they appear in History, with an appendix of Evidences*, Dublin, 1864, has summed up and ended all controversy upon this long-disputed question, and given the last blow to the chimeras of sectarian erudition.

[299] Reeves's *Adamnan*, p. 368.

without counting many in Thuringia and upon the left bank of the Lower Rhine; and, finally, six in Italy.

And that it may be fully apparent how great was the zeal and virtue of which those monastic colonies were at once the product and the centre, let us place by its side an analogous list of saints of Irish origin, whom the gratitude of nations converted, edified, and civilized by them, have placed upon their altars as patrons and founders of those churches whose foundations they watered with their blood: —

A hundred and fifty (of whom thirty-six were martyrs) in Germany,
Forty-five (of whom six were martyrs) in Gaul,
Thirty in Belgium,
Thirteen in Italy,
Eight, all martyrs, in Norway and Iceland.[300]

In the after part of this narrative we shall meet many of the most illustrious, especially in Germany. Let us confine ourselves here to pointing out, among the thirteen Irish saints honored with public veneration in Italy, him who is still invoked at the extremity of the peninsula as the patron of Tarento under the name of San Cataldo.

San Cataldo, bishop of Tarento.

His name in Ireland was Cathal, and before he left his country to go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and to become a bishop at Tarento, he had presided over the great monastic school of Lismore,[301] in the south of Ireland.[302] Thanks to his zeal and knowledge, this school had become a sort of university, to which he attracted an immense crowd of students, not only Irish, but foreigners, from Wales, England, France, and even from Germany. When their education was concluded, a portion of them remained to increase the already numerous communities in the holy and lettered city of Lismore; the others carried back with them to their different countries a recollection of the advantages which they owed to Ireland and her monks.[303]

[300] Stephen White, *Apologia*, in Haverty's *History of Ireland*.

[301] See his acts, in Colgan, p. 542–562, and the Bollandists, vol. ii. May, p. 569–578. Lanigan (vol. iii. p. 121–128) quotes a life of this saint in Latin verse by Bonaventura Moroni. His father, St. Donatus, is supposed to have been bishop of Lecce, in the same province as Tarento.

[302] See the legend of the founder of Lismore, Book VIII. chap. iii.

[303] "Egregia jam et sancta civitas est Lismor, cujus dimidium est asylum, in quo nulla mulier audet intrare, sed plenum est cellis et monasteriis sanctis: et multitudo virorum sanctorum semper illi manet. Viri enim religiosi ex omni parte Hiberniæ, et non solum ex Anglia et Britannia confluunt ad eam, volentes ibi migrare ad Christum." — *Act. Sanct. Bolland.*, vol. iii. May, p. 388. "Ad eam brevi excellentiam pervenit, ut ad ipsum audiendum Galli,

Crowd of foreign students, especially of Anglo-Saxons, in the Irish cloisters.

For it is important to prove that, while Ireland sent forth her sons into all the regions of the then known world, numberless strangers hastened there to seat themselves at the feet of her doctors, and to find in that vast centre of faith and knowledge all the remnants of ancient civilization which her insular position had permitted her to save from the flood of barbarous invasions.

The monasteries which gradually covered the soil of Ireland were thus the hostelries of a foreign emigration. Unlike the ancient Druidical colleges, they were open to all. The poor and the rich, the slave as well as the freeman, the child and the old man, had free access and paid nothing. It was not, then, only to the natives of Ireland that the Irish monasteries, occupied and ruled by the sons of Columba, confined the benefits of knowledge and of literary and religious education. They opened their door with admirable generosity to strangers from every country and of every condition; above all, to those who came from the neighboring island, England, some to end their lives in an Irish cloister, some to search from house to house for books, and masters capable of explaining those books. The Irish monks received with kindness guests so greedy of instruction, and gave them both books and masters, the food of the body and the food of the soul, without demanding any recompense.[304] The Anglo-Saxons, who were afterwards to repay this teaching with ingratitude so cruel, were of all nations the one which derived most profit from it. From the seventh to the eleventh century English students flocked into Ireland, and for four hundred years the monastic schools of the island maintained the great reputation which brought so many suc-

Angli, Scoti, Teutones aliique finitarum regionum quam plurimi Lesmorium conveniunt." — *Officium S. Cataldi*, ap. LANIGAN, *loco cit.* This monastic town of Lismore, the seat of a bishopric since united with that of Waterford, must not be identified with another bishopric called Lismore, situated in an island of the Hebridean archipelago. The Irish Lismore is now specially remarkable for a fine castle of the Duke of Devonshire on the picturesque banks of the Blackwater.

[304] "Erant ibidem multi nobilium simul et mediocrium de gente Anglorum qui . . . relicta patria, vel divinæ lectionis, vel continentioris vitæ gratia illo secesserant. Et quidam mox se monasticæ conversationi fideliter maneipaverunt, alii magis circumeundo per cellas magistrorum lectioni operam dare gaudebant, quod omnes Scoti libentissime suscipientes victum eis quotidianum sine pretio, aliis quoque ad legendum et magisterium gratuitum præbere curabant." — BEDE, iii. 27, ad ann. 664. There still existed in Armagh, in 1092, a locality called *Trien-Saxon*, inhabited by Anglo-Saxon students. — COLGAN, *Trias Thaum.*, p. 300; compare LANIGAN, iii. 490, 493.

cessive generations to dip deeply there into the living waters of knowledge and of faith.

Terrible confusions of existence in Ireland.

This devotion to knowledge and generous munificence towards strangers, this studious and intellectual life, nourished into being by the sheltering warmth of faith, shone with all the more brightness amid the horrible confusion and bloody disasters which signalize, in so far as concerned temporal affairs, the *Golden Age* of ecclesiastical history in Ireland, even before the sanguinary invasions of the Danes at the end of the eighth century. It has been said with justice that war and religion have been in all ages the two great passions of Ireland. But it must be allowed that war seems almost always to have carried the day over religion, and that religion did not prevent war from degenerating too often into massacres and assassinations. It is true that after the eighth century there are fewer kings murdered by their successors than in the period between St. Patrick and St. Columba; it is true that three or four of these kings lived long enough to have the time to go and expiate their sins as monks at Armagh or Iona.[305] But it is not less true that the annals of the monastic family of Columba present to us at each line with mournful laconism a spectacle which absolutely contradicts the flattering pictures which have been drawn of the peace which Ireland should have enjoyed. Almost every year, such words as the following are repeated with cruel brevity: —

Bellum.	*Vastatio.*	*Obsessio.*
Bellum lacrymabile.	*Spoliatio.*	*Strages Magna.*
Bellum magnum.	*Violatio.*	*Jugulatio.*

And above all, *Jugulatio.* It is the word which returns oftenest, and in which seems to be summed up the destiny of these unhappy princes and people.

Such an enumeration should give rise to the reflection, what this wild tree of Celtic nature would have been without

[305] These kings are, according to the Annals of Tigherneach —

Comgall, who died a monk at Lotra (? — perhaps Lure) in 710.

Feailhbeartach, who abdicated in 729, and was a monk for thirty years at Armagh.

Domhnall, or Donald III., who died at Iona in 764.

Niall Fiosach, who died at Iona in 777, after having been a monk for seven years.

The principal kings or monarchs of the island are alone mentioned here. As for the provincial kings, or chieftains of clans, who took the monastic habit, it would be impossible to count them. Many are named in the *Cambrensis Eversus* of Lynch, c. 30.

the monastic graft. We can thus perceive with what ferocious natures Columba and his disciples had to do. If not withstanding the preaching of the monks, a state of affairs so barbarous continued to exist, what might it have been had the Gospel never been preached to those savages, and if the monks had not been in the midst of them like a permanent incarnation of the Spirit of God?

The monks were at the same time neither less inactive nor more spared than the women, who fought and perished in the wars precisely like the men, up to the time when the most illustrious of Columba's successors delivered them from that terrible bondage. A single incident drawn from the sanguinary chaos of the period will suffice at once to paint the almost atrocious habits of those Celtic Christians, and the always beneficent influence of monastic authority. A hundred years after the death of Columba, his biographer and ninth successor, Adamnan, was crossing a plain, carrying his old mother on his back, when they saw two bands fighting, and in the midst of the battle a woman dragging another woman after her, whose breast she had pierced with an iron hook. At this horrible spectacle the abbot's mother seated herself on the ground, and said to him, "I will not leave this spot till thou hast promised me to have women exempted forever from this horror, and from every battle and expedition." He gave her his word, and he kept it. At the next national assembly of Tara, he proposed and carried a law which is inscribed in the annals of Ireland as the *Law of Adamnan*, or *Law of the Innocents*, and which forever freed the Irish women from the obligation of military service and all its homicidal consequences.[306]

Adamnan, the ninth successor of Columba, and his *Law of the Innocents.*

At the same time, nothing was more common in Ireland than the armed intervention of the monks in civil wars, or in the struggles between different communities. We may be permitted to believe that the spiritual descendants of Columba reckoned among them more than one monk of character as warlike as their great ancestor, and that there were as many monastic actors as victims in these desperate con-

[306] "Lex Adamnani. . . . Adamnanus ad Hiberniam pergit et. . . dedit legem innocentium populis." — *Annales Ultoniæ*, an. 696. Compare PETRIE's *Tara*, p. 147. REEVES, pp. 51, 53, 179. The assembly was composed of forty ecclesiastics and thirty-nine laymen. They also decreed an annual tribute to be collected over all Ireland for the benefit of the abbot of Iona and his successors.

flicts. Two centuries after Columba, two hundred monks of his abbey at Durrow perished in a battle with the neighboring monks of Clonmacnoise; and the old annalists of Ireland speak of a battle which took place in 816, at which eight hundred monks of Ferns were killed. The Irish religious had not given up either the warlike humor or the dauntless courage of their race.

Immortal patriotism of the Irish monks.

Nor is it less certain that the studious fervor and persevering patriotism which were such marked features in the character of Columba remained the inalienable inheritance of his monastic posterity — an inheritance which continued up to the middle ages, to the time of that famous statute of Kilkenny, which is an ineffaceable monument of the ferocious arrogance of the English conquerors, even before the Reformation. This statute, after having denounced every marriage between the two races as an act of high treason, went so far as to exclude all native Irish from the monasteries — from those same monasteries which Irishmen alone had founded and occupied for eight centuries, and where, before and after Columba, they had afforded a generous hospitality to the British fugitives and to the victorious Saxons.

But we must not permit ourselves to linger on the Irish coasts. We shall soon again meet her generous and intrepid sons, always the first in the field, and the most ready to expose themselves to danger, among the apostles and propagators of monastic institutions, upon the banks of the Scheldt, the Rhine, and the Danube, where also they were eclipsed and surpassed by the Anglo-Saxons, but where their names, forgotten in Ireland, still shine with a pure and beneficent light.

Influence of Columba in Scotland.

The influence of Columba, so universal, undeniable, and enduring in his native island, should not have been less so in his adopted country — in that Caledonia which became more and more an Irish or Scotic colony, and thus merited the name of Scotland, which it retained. Notwithstanding, his work has perhaps left fewer authentic traces there. All unite in attributing to him the conversion of the Northern Picts, and the introduction or re-establishment of the faith among the Picts of the South and the Scots of the West. It is also pretty generally agreed to date from his times — even though there is no evidence of their direct subordination to Iona — the great monasteries of Old Melrose,[307] Abercorn, Tyn-

Remains of the ancient Caledonian Church.

[307] Old Melrose, which was the cradle of the great and celebrated Cister-

ninghame, and Coldingham, situated between the Forth and the Tweed, and which afterwards became the centres of Christian extension among the Saxons of Northumbria. Further north, but still upon the east coast, the round towers which are still to be seen at Brechin and Abernethy bear witness to their Irish origin, and consequently to the influence of Columba, who was the first and principal Irish missionary in these districts. The same may be said of those primitive and lowly constructions, built with long and large stones laid upon each other, without cement, which are to be found in St. Kilda and other Hebridean isles, and also upon certain points of the neighboring shore, resembling exactly in form the deserted monasteries which are so numerous in the isles of western Ireland.[308] Another relic of the primitive Church is found in the caves, hollowed out or enlarged by the hand of man, in the cliffs or mountains of the interior, inhabited of old, as were the grots of Subiaco and Marmoutier, and as the caves of Meteores in Albania[309] are still by hermits, or sometimes even by bishops (as St. Woloc, St. Regulus[310]). Kentigern, the apostle of Strathclyde, appears to us in the legend at the mouth of his episcopal cave, which was hollowed out in the side of a cliff, and where the people looked at him from afar with respectful curiosity, while he studied the direction of the storms at sea, and breathed in with pleasure the first breezes of the spring.

Apostleship of St. Kentigern.

The bishop, Welsh by birth, has already been mentioned in connection with the principality of Wales, where, as we have already seen, he founded an immense monastery during an exile, the cause of which it is impossible to ascertain, but which was the occasion of a relapse into idolatry among his diocesans.[311] The district of Strathclyde or Cumbria, on the west coasts of Britain, from the mouth of the Clyde to that of the Mersey — that is to say, from Glasgow to Liverpool —

cian Abbey of Melrose, whose ruins are admired by all travellers and readers of Walter Scott. The site alone now remains.

[308] Studied carefully by Lord Dunraven and other members of the learned company called the Irish Archæological and Celtic Society.

[309] Curzon's *Monasteries of the Levant*.

[310] See above, the note of the Bollandists upon the apostolic labors of St. Regulus. An *auge* or lavatory in stone is still shown near the ruined church of Strath Deveron, which is called St. Woloc's bath, and where mothers came to bathe their sick children. This holy bishop lived in a house built like the first church of Iona. "Pauperculam casam calamis viminibusque contextam." — *Breviarium Aberdonense*, Propr. SS., p. 14.

[311] *Acta SS. Bolland.*, vol. i. January, p. 819.

was occupied by a mingled race of Britons and Scots, whose capital was Al-Cluid, now Dumbarton. A prince called Roderick (Rydderch Haël), whose mother was Irish, and who had been baptized by an Irish monk, hastened, when the authority fell into his hands, to recall Kentigern, who returned, bringing with him a hive of Welsh monks, and established definitively the seat of his apostleship at Glasgow, where Ninian had preceded him nearly a century before without leaving any lasting traces of his passage. Kentigern, more fortunate, established upon the site of a burying-ground consecrated by Ninian the first foundation of the magnificent cathedral which still bears his name.[312]

It was consecrated by an Irish bishop, brought from Ireland for the purpose, and who celebrated that ceremony without the assistance of other bishops, according to Celtic customs. Kentigern collected round him numerous disciples, all learned in holy literature, all working with their hands, and possessing nothing as individuals — a true monastic community.[313] He distinguished himself during all his episcopate by his efforts to bring back to the faith the Picts of Galloway, which formed part of the kingdom of Strathclyde; and afterwards by numerous missions and monastic foundations throughout all Albyn — a name which was then given to midland Scotland. His disciples penetrated even to the Orkney Isles, where they must have met with the missionaries of Iona.[314]

The salutary and laborious activity of Kentigern must often have encroached upon the regions which were specially within the sphere of Columba. But the generous heart of Columba was inaccessible to jealousy. He was besides the personal friend of Kentigern and of King Roderick.[315] The fame of the Bishop of Strathclyde's apostolic

[312] St. Mungo's. This is the name borne by Kentigern in Scotland, and means *dearest*. Kentigern seems to be derived from *Ken*, which means head, and *Tiern*, lord, in Welsh (Bolland., p. 820). The existing cathedral of Glasgow was begun in 1124 by Bishop Jocelyn, a monk of Melrose, who at the same time caused a life of his predecessor Kentigern, derived from ancient authorities, to be written by another Jocelyn, a monk of Furness.

[313] "Accito autem de Hibernia uno episcopo, more Britonum et Scotorum, in episcopum ipsum consecrari fecerunt. . . . In singulis casulis, sicut ipse sanctus Kentigernus, commorabantur. Unde et singulares clerici a vulgo *Culdei* nuncupabantur." — Jocelyn, *Vita S. Kentig.* This last passage, quoted by Reeves, *The Culdees of the British Isles*, p. 27, is not in the text given by the Bollandists.

[314] See above, p. 81.

[315] Adamnan, i. 15.

labors drew him from his isle to do homage to his rival. He arrived from Iona with a great train of monks, whom he arranged in three companies at the moment of their entrance into Glasgow. Kentigern distributed in the same way the numerous monks who surrounded him in his episcopal monastery, and whom he led out to meet the abbot of Iona. He divided them, according to their age, into three bands, the youngest of whom marched first; then those who had reached the age of manhood; and, last of all, the old and gray-haired, among whom he himself took his place. They all chanted the anthem *In viis Domini magna est gloria Domini, et via justorum facta est: et iter sanctorum præparatum est.* The monks of Iona, on their side, chanting in choir the versicle, *Ibunt sancti de virtute in virtutem: videbitur Deus eorum in Sion.* From each side echoed the Alleluia; and it was to the sound of those words of Holy Scripture, chanted in Latin by the Celtic monks of Wales and Ireland, that the two apostles of the Picts and Scots met at what had been the extreme boundary of the Roman Empire and limit of the power of the Cæsars, and upon a soil henceforth forever freed from paganism and idolatry. They embraced each other tenderly, and passed several days in intimate and friendly intercourse.

His meeting with Columba.

The historian who has preserved for us the account of this interview does not conceal a less edifying incident. He confesses that some robbers had joined themselves to the following of the abbot of Iona, and that they took advantage of the general enthusiasm to steal a ram from the bishop's flock. They were soon taken; but Kentigern pardoned them. Columba and his fellow-apostle exchanged their pastoral cross before they parted, in token of mutual affection.[316] Another annalist describes them as living together for six months in the monastery which Columba had just founded at Dunkeld, and together preaching the faith to the inhabitants of Atho, and the mountainous regions inhabited by the Picts.[317]

I know not how far we may put faith in another narrative

[316] "Sancti viri famam audiens, ad illum venire, visitare et familiaritatem ejus habere cupiebat . . . cum multa discipulorum turba. . . . In tertia turma senes decora canitie venerabiles. . . . Appropinquantes ad invicem sancti in amplexus mutuos et oscula sancta ruunt. . . . Venerunt cum sancto Columba quidam filii Belial ad furta et peccata assueti. . . . In signum mutuæ dilectionis alterius baculum suscepit."— Bolland., p. 821. The cross given by Columba to Kentigern was long preserved and venerated in the Anglo-Saxon Monastery of Ripon, Yorkshire.

[317] Hector Boetius, *Hist. Scotorum*, l. ix.

of the same author, which seems rather borrowed from the Gallo-Breton epic of Tristan and Iseult than from monastic legend, but which has nevertheless remained Kentigern's most popular title to fame. The wife of King Roderick, led astray by a guilty passion for a knight of her husband's court, had the weakness to bestow upon him a ring which had been given to her by the king. When Roderick was out hunting with this knight, the two took refuge on the banks of the Clyde during the heat of the day, and the knight, falling asleep, unwittingly stretched out his hand, upon which the king saw the ring which he had given to the queen as a token of his love. It was with difficulty that he restrained himself from killing the knight on the spot; but he subdued his rage, and contented himself by taking the ring from his finger and throwing it into the river, without awakening the guilty sleeper. When he had returned to the town he demanded his ring from the queen, and, as she could not produce it, threw her into prison, and gave orders for her execution. She obtained, however, a delay of three days, and having in vain sought the ring from the knight to whom she had given it, she had recourse to the protection of St. Kentigern. The good pastor knew or divined all — the ring, found in a salmon which he had caught in the Clyde, was already in his hands. He sent it to the queen, who showed it to her husband, and thus escaped the punishment which awaited her. Roderick even asked her pardon on his knees, and offered to punish her accusers. From this, however, she dissuaded him, and hastening to Kentigern, confessed her fault to him, and was commanded to pass the rest of her life in penitence. It is for this reason that the ancient effigies of the apostle of Strathclyde represent him as holding always the episcopal cross in one hand, and in the other a salmon with a ring in its mouth.[318]

The legend of the queen's ring.

But neither Kentigern, whose labors can scarcely be said to have survived him, nor Columba, whose influence upon the Picts and Scots was so powerful and lasting, exercised any direct or efficacious ac-

Neither Kentigern nor Columba affect the Anglo-Saxons,

[318] "Contigit reginam . . . pretiosum annulum ob immensum amorem sibi a rege commendatum eidem militi contulisse. . . . Discopulatis canibus. . . . Fatigatus autem miles extenso brachio dormire cœpit. . . . Quum illa secreto militi in vanum mittens proferre non posset. . . Lacrymosis precibus rem gestam sancto Kentigerno per nuntium exposuit. . . . Contristatus rex pro illatis reginæ injuriis, et veniam flexis genibus petens." — BOLLAND., p. 820; compare p. 815.

who continue always pagan, and more and more formidable.

tion upon the Anglo-Saxons, who became stronger and more formidable from day to day, and whose ferocious incursions threatened the Caledonian tribes no less than the Britons. It is apparent, however, that the great abbot of Iona, did not share the repugnance, which had hardened into a system of repulsion, of the Welsh clergy for the Saxon race: express mention. on the contrary, is made in the most authentic documents connected with his history, of Saxon Monks, who had been admitted into the community of Iona. One of them, for instance, had the office of baker there, and was reckoned among Columba's intimates.[319] But nothing indicates that these Saxons, who were enrolled under the authority of Columba, exercised any influence from thence upon their countrymen. On the contrary, while the Scotic-Briton missionaries spread over all the corners of Caledonia, and while Columba and his disciples carried the light of the Gospel into the northern districts where it had never penetrated, the Christian faith and the Catholic Church languished and gave up the ghost in the southern part of the island under the ruins heaped up everywhere by the Saxon conquest.

Paganism and barbarism, vanquished by the Gospel in the Highlands of the north, again arose and triumphed in the south — in the most populous, accessible, and flourishing districts — throughout all that country, which was destined hereafter to play so great a part in the world, and which already began to call itself England. From 569 to 586 — ten years before the death of Columba, and at the period when his authority was best established and most powerful in the north — the last champions of Christian Britain were finally cast out beyond the Severn, while at the same time new bands of Anglo-Saxons in the north, driving back the Picts to the other side of the Tweed, and crossing the Humber to the south, founded the future kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria. It is true that at a later period the sons of Columba carried the Gospel to those Northumbrians and Mercians. But at the end of the sixth century, after a hundred and fifty years of triumphant invasions and struggles, the Saxons had

[319] Cummineus (apud Colgan, p. 320) mentions two Saxons: "Quidam religiosus frater, Genereus nomine, Saxo natione, pictor opere." And subsequently: "Duo ejus discipuli, Lugneus filius Blas et Pillo Saxo genere." Adamnan (iii. 10–22) corrects the conclusions which some authors have drawn from the word *pictor* by employing the words, *opus pistorium exercens*. See *ante*, p. 36.

not yet encountered in any of the then Christian, or at least converted nations (Britons, Scots, and Picts), which they had assailed, fought, and vanquished, either missionaries disposed to announce the good news to them, nor priests capable of maintaining the precious nucleus of faith among the conquered races. In 586 the two last bishops of conquered Britain, those of London and York, abandoned their churches and took refuge in the mountains of Wales, carrying with them the sacred vessels and holy relics which they had been able to save from the rapacity of the idolaters. Other husbandmen were then necessary. From whence were they to come? From the same inextinguishable centre, whence light had been brought to the Irish by Patrick, and to the Britons and Scots by Palladius, Ninian, and Germain.

And already they are here! At the moment when Columba approached the term of his long career in his northern isle, a year before his death, the envoys of Gregory the Great left Rome, and landed where Cæsar had landed, upon the English shore.

BOOK X.

ST. AUGUSTIN OF CANTERBURY AND THE ROMAN MISSIONARIES IN ENGLAND, 597–633.

"Hodie illuxit nobis dies redemptionis novæ, reparationis antiquæ, felicitatis æternæ." — *Christmas Office, Roman Breviary.*

CHAPTER I.

MISSION OF ST. AUGUSTIN.

Origin and character of the Anglo-Saxons. — They have not to struggle, like the Franks, against the Roman decadence. — The seven kingdoms of the Heptarchy. — Institutions, social and political: government patriarchal and federal; seigneury of the proprietors: the *witenagemot* or parliament; social inequality, the *ceorls* and the *eorls;* individual independence and aristocratic federation; fusion of the two races. — The conquered Britons lose the Christian faith. — Vices of the conquerors: slavery; commerce in human flesh. — The young Angles in the Roman market seen and bought by the monk Gregory. — Elected Pope, Gregory undertakes to convert the Angles by means of the monks of his Monastery of Mt. Cœlius, under the conduct of the abbot Augustin. — Critical situation of the Papacy. — Journey of the missionary monks across Gaul; their doubts; letters of Gregory. — Augustin lands at the same spot as Cæsar and the Saxon conquerors in the Isle of Thanet. — King Ethelbert; the queen, Bertha, already a Christian. — First interview under the oak; Ethelbert grants leave to preach. — Entry of the missionaries into Canterbury. — The spring-tide of the Church in England. — Baptism of Ethelbert. — Augustin Archbishop of Canterbury. — The palace of the king changed into a cathedral. — Monastery of St. Augustin beyond the walls of Canterbury. — Donation from the king and the parliament.

Who then were the Anglo-Saxons, upon whom so many efforts were concentrated, and whose conquest is ranked, not without reason, among the most fruitful and most happy that the Church has ever accomplished? Of all the Ger

manic tribes, the most stubborn, intrepid, and independent, this people seems to have transplanted with themselves into the great island which owes to them its name, the genius of the Germanic race, in order that it might bear on this predestined soil its richest and most abundant fruits. The Saxons brought with them a language, a character, and institutions stamped with a strong and invincible originality. Language, character, institutions, have triumphed, in their essential features, over the vicissitudes of time and fortune — have outlived all ulterior conquests, as well as all foreign influences, and, plunging their vigorous roots into the primitive soil of Celtic Britain, still exist at the indestructible foundation of the social edifice of England. Different from the Franks and Goths, who suffered themselves to be speedily neutralized or absorbed in Gaul, Italy, and Spain by the native elements, and still more by the remains of the Roman Decadence, the Saxons had the good fortune to find in Britain a soil free from imperial pollution. Less alienated from the Celtic Britons by their traditions and institutions — perhaps even by their origin — than by the jealousies and resentments of conquests, they had not after their victory to struggle against a spirit opposed to their own. Keeping intact and untamable their old Germanic spirit, their old morals, their stern independence, they gave from that moment to the free and proud genius of their race a vigorous upward impulse which nothing has ever been able to bear down.

The seven kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

Starting in three distinct and successive emigrations from the peninsular region which separates the Baltic from the North Sea, they had found in the level shores of Britain a climate and an aspect like those of their native country. At the end of a century and a half of bloody contests they had made themselves masters of all that now bears the name of England, except the coast and the hilly regions of the west. They had founded there, by fire and sword, the seven kingdoms so well known under the title of the Heptarchy, which have left their names to several of the existing divisions of that country, where nothing falls into irreparable ruin, because everything there, as in nature, takes a new form and a fresh life. The Jutes, the first and most numerous immigrants, had established in the angle of the island nearest to Germany, the kingdom of Kent, and occupied a part of the coast of the Channel (the Isle of Wight and Hampshire). Then the Saxons, properly so called,

spreading out and consolidating themselves from the east to the south, and from the south to the west, had stamped their name and their authority on the kingdoms of Essex, Sussex, and Wessex.[1] Finally, the Angles laid hold of the north and the east, and there planted, first, the kingdom of East Anglia on the coast of the North Sea, and next that of Mercia in the unoccupied territory between the Thames and the Humber; then, to the north of the latter river, the largest of all the Saxon kingdoms, Northumbria, almost always divided into two, Deira and Bernicia, the confines of which stretched away to join the Picts and Scots, beyond even the limits which the Roman domination had lately reached.

Political and social institutions of the Anglo-Saxons.

This race of pirates and plunderers, hunters and robbers of their kind, possessed nevertheless the essential elements of social order. They made this clearly apparent as soon as they were able to settle down, and to adjust their settlements on that insular soil which the Britons had not been able to defend against the Romans, nor the Romans against the barbarians of the north, nor these last against the hardy seamen from the east. The Anglo-Saxons alone have been able to establish there an immovable order of society, whose first foundations were laid when the missionary monks came to bring to them the lights of faith and of Christian virtue.

At the end of the sixth century the Anglo-Saxons already formed a great people, subject, as the Celtic races had been, to the patriarchal and federal rule, which so happily distinguished those brave and free nations from the rabble corrupted by the solitary despotism of Rome. But among them, as among all the Germanic races, this government was secured by the powerful guarantee of property.

Property.

The wandering and disorderly clan, the primitive band of pirates and pillagers, disappears, or transforms itself, in order to make room for the family permanently established by the hereditary appropriation of the soil; and this soil was not only snatched from the vanquished race, but laboriously won from the forests, fens, and untilled moors. The chiefs and men of substance of these leading families formed a sovereign and warlike aristocracy, controlled by the kings, assemblies, and laws.

The kings all belonged to a kind of caste composed of

[1] Saxons of the East, the South, and the West. The existing county of Middlesex bears witness to the same origin; it is the region inhabited by the Saxons of the Middle.

The kings. the families which professed to trace their descent from Odin or Woden, the deified monarch of German mythology:[2] their royalty was elective and limited: they could do nothing without the consent of those who accepted them as chiefs, but not as masters. The assemblies, which at first resembled those which Tacitus has recorded as existing among the Germans, and composed of the entire tribe (*volk-mot*) were speedily limited to the elders, to the wise men (*witena-gemot*) to the chiefs of the principal families of each tribe or kingdom, and to men endowed with the double prerogative of blood and property. They were held in the open air, under venerable oaks, and at stated periods; they took part in all the affairs of the body politic, and regulated with sovereign authority all rights that were established or defended by the laws.

The assemblies.

Laws. The laws themselves were simply treaties of peace discussed and guaranteed by the grand council of each little nation, between the king and those on whom depended his security and his power; between the different parties in every process, civil and criminal; between different groups of free men, all armed and all possessors of lands, incessantly exposed to risk their life, their possessions, the honor and safety of their wives, children, kindred, dependents, and friends, in daily conflicts springing from that individual right of making war which is to be found at the root of all German liberty and legislation.[3]

Social inequalities: *Ceorls* and *Eorls.* Disparity of rank, which was in ancient times the inseparable companion of freedom, existed among the Saxons, as it did everywhere. The class of freemen — *ceorls* — possessors of land and of political power, who constituted the vital strength of the nation, had under them not only slaves, the fruit of their wars and conquests, but in much greater number servitors, laborers, dependants, who had not the same rights as they possessed; but they in their turn acknowledged as superiors the nobles, the *eorls*, who were born to command, and to fill the offices of priest, judge, and chief, under the primary authority of the king.[4]

[2] Ethelwerdi *Chronic.*, lib. i. p. 474, ap. Savile.

[3] Palgrave, *The Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, London, 1832. Lappenberg, *Geschichte von England*, Hamburg, 1834. Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici* (London, 1839–48), and *The Saxons in England*, London, 1849. Baron D'Eckstein, various notices and memoirs.

[4] The Anglo-Saxon laws and diplomas, and particularly the charters of

Thus that part of Great Britain which has since taken the name of England, was at this early period made up of an aggregation of tribes and independent communities, among which the exigencies of a common struggle against their warlike neighbors of the north and west helped to develop a gradual tendency towards union. It settled into an aristocratic federation, in which families of a reputedly divine origin presided over the social and military life of each tribe, but in which personal independence was at the base of the whole fabric. This independence was always able to reclaim its rights when a prince more than ordinarily dexterous and energetic encroached upon them. Its influence was everywhere felt in establishing and maintaining social life on the principle of free association for mutual benefit.[5] All that the freemen had not expressly given over to the chiefs established by themselves, or to associates freely accepted by them, remained forever their own inviolable possession. Such, at that obscure and remote epoch, as in our own day, was the fundamental and gloriously unalterable principle of English public life.

The British population, which had survived the fury of the Saxon Conquest, and which had not been able or willing to seek for refuge in the mountains and peninsulas of Wales and Cornwall, seems to have accommodated itself to the new order of things. When the conquest was fully achieved, in those districts where the indigenous race had not been completely exterminated,[6] no traces of insurrection or of general discontent are to be found among the British; and the opinion of those who maintain that the condition of the mass of the British population remaining in the conquered regions was not worse under the Saxon invaders than it had been under the yoke of the Romans, or even under that of their native princes, so reviled by their compatriot the historian Gildas, may be admitted as probable.[7] It may even be sup-

monastic endowments, constantly repeat this distinction between *ceorls* and *eorls*, which is found in the Scandinavian mythology, between the *Karls* and the *Jarls*, the offspring of the intercourse of a god with two different women. See the song of the first Edda, entitled *Rigsmal*. The word *ceorl* is the parent of the *churl* of modern English; as *eorl* is perpetuated in *earl*. The one has fallen in dignity, the other has risen.

[5] Kemble, *Saxons in England*, vol. ii. p. 312.

[6] It has been already stated that in some districts the Saxons annihilated the conquered population. But this was only in exceptional cases. See on this subject the excellent summary of Burke in his *Abridged Essay on the History of England* — a work too much forgotten, though altogether worthy of the greatest of Englishmen.

[7] Such is, especially, the opinion of Kemble, who otherwise generalizes

posed that this fusion of the conquerors and the conquered was productive of great benefit to the former. It would be hard to say whether the heroic tenacity which has become the distinctive characteristic of the English may not have been derived mainly from that vigorous race which, after having coped with Cæsar, proved itself the only one among all the nations subjected to the Roman yoke capable of struggling for two centuries against the invasion of the barbarians.[8]

The vanquished Britons lose the Christian faith.

But this assimilation of the two races could not but operate to the prejudice of the Christian faith. Unlike the barbarian invaders of the Continent, the Saxons did not adopt the religion of the people they had subdued. In Gaul, Spain, and Italy, Christianity had flourished anew, and gained fresh strength under the dominion of the Franks and the Goths; it had conquered the conquerors. In Britain it disappeared under the pressure of the alien conquest. No traces of Christianity remained in the districts under Saxon sway when Rome sent thither her missionaries. Here and there a ruined church might be found, but not one living Christian amongst the natives;[9] conquerors and conquered alike were lost in the darkness of paganism.

It is not necessary to inquire whether, along with this proud and vigorous independence, in which we have recognized a rare and singularly advanced condition of political intelligence and social vitality, the Anglo-Saxons exhibited moral virtues of an equally elevated order. Such an assertion no one would be disposed to believe. Certainly "there existed under this native barbarism noble dispositions unknown to the Roman world. Under the brute the free man, and also the man of heart, might always be discovered."[10] Even more, intermingled with daily outbursts of daring and of violence there might also be found miracles of heroic and simple devotion — of sincere and lofty enthusiasm — which emulated or forestalled Christianity. But alongside of these

too freely upon the exaggerations of history in relation to the oppression or extermination of vanquished nations. The events which since 1772 have occurred in Poland, in Lithuania, in Circassia, and elsewhere, prove that it is very possible, even in the full light of modern civilization, and under princes consecrated before the altar of the living God, to proceed with an invincible determination to the destruction of human races.

[8] La Borderie, p. 231.

[9] Burke, *Works*, vol. vi. p. 216.

[10] Taine, *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise.*

wonders of primitive virtue, what miracles of vice and crime, of avarice, lust, and ferocity! The religion of their Scandinavian forefathers, whose primitive myths concealed no small amount of traditional truth under symbols full of grace and majesty, was only too soon corrupted or obscured. It did not preserve them from any excess, superstition, or fetishism: perhaps not even from the human sacrifices which were known to all other pagan nations. What could be expected in point of morality from people accustomed to invoke and to worship Worden, the god of massacres, Freya, the Venus of the North, the goddess of sensuality, and all these bloody and obscene gods of whom one had for his emblem a naked sword, and another the hammer with which he broke the heads of his enemies?[11] The immortality which was promised to them in their Walhalla but reserved for them new days of slaughter and nights of debauch, spent in drinking deep from the skulls of their victims. And in this world their life was but too often only a prolonged orgie of carnage, rapine, and lechery. The traditional respect for woman which marked the Germanic tribes was limited among the Saxons, as elsewhere, by singular exceptions, and did not extend beyond the princesses or the daughters of the victorious and dominant race.

Vices of the conquerors.

Such mercy as they ever showed to the vanquished consisted only in sparing their lives in order to reduce them to servitude, and sell them as slaves. That frightful slave-traffic which has disgraced successively all pagan and all Christian nations was among them carried on with a kind of inveterate passion.[12] It needed, as we shall see, whole centuries of incessant efforts to extirpate it. Nor was it only captives and vanquished foes that they condemned to this extremity of misfortune and shame: it was their kindred, their fellow-countrymen; even, like Joseph's brethren, those of their own blood, their sons and daughters, that they set up to auction and sold to merchants who came from the Continent to supply themselves in the Anglo-Saxon market with these human chattels. It was by this infamous commerce that Great

Slavery.

The trade in human cattle.

[11] See the interesting chapter on the religion of the Germans in Ozanam's *Germains avant le Christianisme*, 1847.

[12] "Venales ex Northumbria pueri, familiari et pene ingenita illi nationi consuetudine, adeo ut, sicut nostra quoque sæcula viderunt non dubitarent arctissimas necessitudines sub prætextu minimorum commodorum distrahere." WILLELMUS MALMESBURIENSIS, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, 1. 3.

Britain, having become almost as great a stranger to the rest of Europe as she was before the days of Cæsar, re-entered the circle of the nations, making herself known once more, as in the time of Cæsar, when Cicero anticipated no other profit to Rome from the expedition of the proconsul than the produce of the sale of British slaves.[13]

Nevertheless, it was from the depth of this shameful abyss that God was about to evolve the opportunity of delivering England from the fetters of paganism, of introducing her by the hand of the greatest of the Popes into the bosom of the Church, and, at the same time, of bringing her within the pale of Christian civilization.

Anglo-Saxon children sold at Rome.

Who will ever explain to us how these traffickers in men found a market for their merchandise at Rome? Yes, at Rome, in the full light of Christianity, six centuries after the birth of the Divine Deliverer, and three centuries after the peace of the Church; at Rome, governed since Constantine by Christian emperors, and in which was gradually developing the temporal sovereignty of the Popes. It was so, however, in the year of grace 586 or 587, under Pope Pelagius II. Slaves of both sexes and of all countries, and among them some children, young Saxons, were exposed for sale in the Roman forum like any other commodity. Priests and monks mingled with the crowd that came to bid or to look on at the auction; and among the spectators appears the gentle, the generous, the immortal Gregory.[14] He thus learned to detest this leprosy of slavery which it was afterwards given him to restrict and to contend against, though not to extirpate it.[15]

St. Gregory the Great inquires about, and redeems them.

This scene, which the father of English history found among the traditions of his Northumbrian ancestors, and the dialogue in which are portrayed with such touching and quaint originality the pious and compassionate spirit of Gregory, and at the same time his strange love of punning, has been a hundred times rehearsed. Every one knows how, at the sight of these young slaves, struck with the beauty of their counte-

[13] "Britannici belli exitus exspectatur. . . . Illud cognitum est, neque argenti scripulum ullum esse in illa insula, neque ullam spem prædæ nisi ex mancipiis." — *Epist. ad. Attic.*, iv. 16.

[14] "Die quadam cum advenientibus nuper mercatoribus multa venalia in forum fuissent collata, multique ad emendum confluxissent, et ipsum Gregorium inter alios advenisse, ac vidisse inter alia pueros venales positos." — Bede, ii. 1.

[15] Joan. Diac., *Vita S. Gregorii*, iv. 45, 46, 47. S. Greg., *Epist.*, iv. 9, 13; vii. 24, 38, and elsewhere.

nances, the dazzling purity of their complexions, the length of their fair locks (probably index of aristocratic birth) he inquired what was their country and their religion. The slave-dealer informed him that they came from the island of Britain, where every one had the same beauty of complexion, and that they were heathens. Heaving a profound sigh, "What evil luck," cried Gregory, "that the Prince of Darkness should possess beings with an aspect so radiant, and that the grace of these countenances should reflect a soul void of the inward grace! But what nation are they of?" "They are Angles." "They are well named, for these Angles have the faces of angels; and they must become the brethren of the angels in heaven. From what province have they been brought?" "From Deïra" (one of the two kingdoms of Northumbria). "Still good," answered he. "*De ira eruti* — they shall be snatched from the ire of God, and called to the mercy of Christ. And how name they the king of their country?" "Alle or Ælla." "So be it; he is right well named, for they shall soon sing the Alleluia in his kingdom."[16]

It is natural to believe that the rich and charitable abbot bought these captive children, and that he conveyed them at once to his own home — that is to say, to the palace of his father, where he was born, which he had changed into a monastery, and which was not far from the forum where the young Britons were exposed for sale. The purchase of these three or four slaves was thus the origin of the redemption of all England.

An Anglo-Saxon chronicler, a Christian but a layman, who wrote four centuries later, but who exemplifies the influence of domestic traditions among that people by giving to his own genealogy a very high rank in the history of his race,[17]

[16] "Nec silentio prætereunda opinio quæ de beato Gregorio traditione majorum ad nos usque perlata est. . . . Candidi et lactei corporis, venusti vultus, capillorum forma egregia . . . crine rutila. . . . Intimo ex corde suspiria ducens . . . interrogavit mercatorem. . . . De Britanniæ insula cujus incolarum omnis facies simili candore fulgescit. . . . Heu proh dolor! quod tam lucidi vultus . . . tantaque gratia frontispicii. . . . Bene Angli quasi angeli, quia et angelicos vultus habent . . . Bene quia rex dicitur Aelle. Alleluia etenim in partibus illis oportet decantari." — BEDE, *loc. cit.* PAUL DIAC., *Vita S. Gregorii*, c. 14. JOAN DIAC., *Vita S. Gregorii*, i. 21. GOTSELINI, *Historia Maior de Vita S. Augustini*, c. 4. LAPPENBERG. p. 138. The name of Ælla fixes the date of this incident to a period necessarily prior to the death of this prince in 588.

[17] ETHELWERDI *Chronic.*, lib. ii. c. 1. See his curious preamble to his cousin Matilda, in Savile, and the remarks of Lappenberg, p. 55.

says expressly that Gregory lodged his guests in the *triclinium*, where he loved to serve with his own hand the table of the poor, and that after he had instructed and baptized them, it was his desire to take them with him as his companions, and to return to their native land in order to convert it to Christ. All authors unanimously admit that from that moment he conceived the grand design of bringing over the Anglo-Saxons to the Catholic Church. To this design he consecrated a perseverance, a devotion, and a prudence which the greatest men have not surpassed. We have already seen how, after this scene in the slave-market, he sought and obtained from the Pope permission to go as a missionary to the Anglo-Saxons, and how, at the tidings of his departure, the Romans, after overwhelming the Pope with reproaches, ran after their future pontiff, and, overtaking him three days' journey from Rome, brought him back by force to the Eternal City.[18]

590. Scarcely had he been elected Pope, when his great and cherished design became the object of his constant thought. His intrepid soul dwells on it with an unfailing interest, and his vast correspondence everywhere testifies its existence.[19] While waiting until he should discover the fit man to conduct this special mission, he never forgot the English slaves — the heathen children whose sad lot had been the means of revealing to him the conquest which God had in store for him, and whose brothers were to be found in the slave-markets of other Christian countries. He writes to the priest Candidius, who had the management of the patrimony of the Roman Church in Gaul, "We charge you to lay out the money which you have received, in the purchase of young English slaves, of seventeen or eighteen years of age, whom you shall train in the monastery for the service of God. In this way the coins of Gaul, which are not current here, will be put on the spot to a suitable use. If you can draw anything from the revenues which they say have been withheld from us, you must employ it equally either to procure clothing for the poor or to buy these young slaves. But as they will yet be heathens, they must be accompanied by a priest, who may baptize them if they fall sick by the way."[20] At last, in the

[18] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 361.

[19] *Epist.*, ix. 108, ad Syagrium episc. Augustodunensem. "Cum pro convertendis Anglis-Saxonibus, quemadmodum in monachatu suo proposuerat, assiduis cogitationum fluctibus urgeretur." — Joan. Diac., ii. 33.

[20] "Volumus ut dilectio tua . . . quatenus solidi Galliarum qui in terra

sixth year of his pontificate, he decided to select as the apostles of the distant island, whither his thoughts continually carried him, the monks of the Monastery of St. Andrew, on Mount Cœlius, and to appoint as their leader Augustine, the prior of that beloved house.

The monastery whence issued the apostles of England.

This monastery is the one which now bears the name of St. Gregory, and is known to all who have visited Rome. That incomparable city contains few spots more attractive and more worthy of eternal remembrance. The sanctuary occupies the western angle of Mount Cœlius, and the site of the hallowed grove and fountain which Roman mythology has consecrated by the graceful and touching fable of Numa and the nymph Egeria.[21] It is at an equal distance from the Circus Maximus, the baths of Caracalla, and the Coliseum, and near to the church of the holy martyrs John and Paul. The cradle of English Christianity is thus planted on the soil steeped with the blood of many thousands of martyrs. In front rises the Mons Palatinus, the cradle of heathen Rome, still covered with the vast remains of the palace of the Cæsars. To the left of the grand staircase which leads to the existing monastery, three small buildings stand apart on a plot of grass.[22] On the door of one you read these words — *Triclinium Pauperum;* and within is preserved the table at which every day were seated the twelve beggars whom Gregory fed and personally waited upon. The other is dedicated to the memory of his mother, Silvia, who had followed his example in devoting herself to a religious life, and whose portrait he had caused to be painted in the porch of his monastery.[23]

Between these two small edifices stands the oratory dedicated by Gregory, while still a simple monk, to the apostle St. Andrew, at the time when he transformed his patrimonial mansion into the cloister whence were to issue the apostles of England. In the church of the monastery, which now belongs to the Camaldolites, is still shown the pulpit from which Gregory preached, the bed on which he took his brief repose, the altar before which he must have so often prayed for the conversion of his beloved English. On the façade of the

nostra expendi non possunt apud locum proprium utiliter expendantur. . . . Sed quia pagani sunt . . . volo ut cum eis presbyter transmittatur ne quid ægritudinis contingat in via, ut quos morituros conspexerit, debeat baptizare." — *Epist.*, vi. 7.

[21] Ampere, *L'Histoire Romaine à Rome*, pp. 4, 370, 498.

[22] Gerbet, *Esquisse de Rome Chrétienne*, vol. i. p. 447.

[23] Joan Diac., *Vita Gregorii*, iv. c. 83.

church an inscription records that thence set out the first apostles of the Anglo-Saxons, and preserves their names.[24] Under the porch are seen the tombs of some generous Englishmen who died in exile for their fidelity to the religion which these apostles taught them; and, among other sepulchral inscriptions, this which follows may be remarked and remembered: "Here lies Robert Pecham, an English Catholic, who, after the disruption of England and the Church, quitted his country, unable to endure life there without the faith, and who, coming to Rome, died, unable to endure life here without his country."[25]

Where is the Englishman worthy of the name who, in looking from the Palatine to the Coliseum, could contemplate without emotion and without remorse this spot from whence have come to him the faith and name of Christian, the Bible of which he is so proud — the Church herself of which he has preserved but the shadow? Here were the enslaved children of his ancestors gathered together and saved. On these stones they knelt who made his country Christian. Under these roofs was the grand design conceived by a saintly mind, intrusted to God, blessed by Him, accepted and carried out by humble and generous Christians. By these steps descended the forty monks who bore to England the word of God and the light of the Gospel along with Catholic unity, the apostolical succession, and the rule of St. Benedict. No country ever received the gift of salvation more directly

[24] The following is the exact text of the inscription transcribed by the friendly hand of an eloquent monk of our time and country, Father Hyacinth, of the Barefooted Carmelites: —

EX HOC MONASTERIO
PRODIERVNT

S. GREGORIVS. M. FVNDATOR. ET. PARENS. — S. ELVTHERIVS. AB. — S. HILARION. AB. — S. AVGVSTINVS. ANGLOR. APOSTOL. — S. LAVRENTIVS. CANTVAR. ARCHIEP. — S. MELLITVS. LONDINEN. EP. MOX. ARCHIEP. CANTVAR. — S. IVSTVS EP. ROFFENSIS. — S. PAVLINVS. EP. EBORAC. — S. MAXIMIANVS. SYRACVSAN EP. — SS. ANTONIVS. MERVLVS. ET. JOANNES. MONACHI. — S. PETRVS. AB. CANTVAR.

HONORIVS. ARCHIEP. CANTVAR. — MARINIANVS. ARCHIEP. RAVEN. — PROBVS. XENODOCHI. IEROSOLYMIT. CURATOR. A. S. GREGORIO. ELECT. — SABINVS. CALLIPOLIT. EP. — FELIX. MESSANEN. EP. — GREGORIVS. DIAC. CARD. S. EUSTACH.

HIC. ETIAM. DIU. VIXIT. M. GREGORII. MATER. S. SILVIA. HOC. MAXIME. COLENDA. QVOD. TANTVM. PIETATIS SAPIENTIAE. ET. DOCTRINAE. LVMEN. PEPERERIT.

[25] Quoted in the address of M. Augustin Cochin to the Congress at Malines, 20th August, 1863.

from popes and monks, and none, alas! so soon and so cruelly betrayed them.

Critical state of the Papacy.

Nothing could be more sad and sombre than the state of the Church at the epoch when Gregory resolved to put his project into execution. This great man — by turns soldier, general, statesman, administrator, and legislator, but always, and before all, pontiff and apostle — had need of more than human boldness to take in hand distant conquests, surrounded as he was by perils and disasters, and at a moment when Rome, devastated by plague, famine, and the inundations of the Tiber, mercilessly taxed and shamelessly abandoned by the Byzantine emperors, was struggling against the aggressions of the Lombards, which became every day more menacing.[25] It is not without reason that a writer more learned than enthusiastic represents the expedition of Augustin as an act as heroic as Scipio's departure for Africa while Hannibal was at the gates of Rome.[27]

Journey of the monkish missionaries across Gaul.

Absolutely nothing is known of Augustin's history previous to the solemn days on which, in obedience to the commands of the pontiff, who had been his abbot, he and his forty comrades tore themselves from the motherly bosom of that community which was to them as their native land. He must, as prior of the monastery, have exhibited distinguished qualifications ere he could have been chosen by Gregory for such a mission. But there is nothing to show that his companions were at that time animated with the same zeal which inspired the Pope. They arrived without hinderance in Provence, and stopped for some time at Lerins, in that Mediterranean isle of the Saints where, a century and a half before, Patrick, the monastic apostle of the western isle of Saints, had sojourned for nine years before he was sent by Pope Celestine to evangelize Ireland. But, there or elsewhere, the Roman monks received frightful accounts of the country which they were going to convert. They were told that the Anglo-Saxon people, of whose language they were ignorant, were a nation of wild beasts, thirsting for innocent blood — a race whom it was impossible to approach or conciliate, and to land on whose coast was to rush to certain destruction. They took fright at these tales; and in place of continuing their route, they persuaded Augustin to return to Rome to beseech the Pope to relieve them

[25] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 356.
[27] Kemble, *Saxons in England*, vol. ii. p. 357.

from a journey so toilsome, so perilous, and so useless.[28] Instead of listening to their request, Gregory sent Augustin back to them with a letter in which they were ordered to recognize him henceforth as their abbot — to obey him in everything, and, above all, not to let themselves be terrified by the toils of the way or by the tongue of the detractor. "Better were it," wrote Gregory, "not to begin that good work at all, than to give it up after having commenced it. . . . Forward, then, in God's name! . . . The more you have to suffer, the brighter will your glory be in eternity. May the grace of the Almighty protect you, and grant to me to behold the fruit of your labors in the eternal country; if I cannot share your toil, I shall none the less rejoice in the harvest, for God knows that I lack not good will." [29]

Letters of the Pope.

23d July, 596.

Augustin was the bearer of numerous letters of the same date,[30] written by the Pope first of all to the Abbot of Lerins, to the Bishop of Aix, and to the Governor of Provence, thanking them for the hearty welcome they had given to his missionaries; and next to the Bishops of Tours, of Marseilles, of Vienne, and of Autun; and, above all, to Virgilius, Metropolitan of Arles, warmly recommending to them Augustin and his mission, but without explaining its nature or its aim.

He acted differently in his letters to the two young kings of Austrasia and of Burgundy, and to their mother, Brunehaut, who reigned in their name over the whole of Eastern France. In appealing to the orthodoxy which distinguished beyond all others the Frank nation, he announces to them that he has learned that the English were disposed to receive the Christian faith, but that the priests of the neighboring regions (that is, of Wales) took no pains to preach it to them; wherefore he asks that the missionaries sent by him to enlighten and save the English may obtain interpreters to go with them across the Straits, and a royal safe-conduct to guarantee their safety during their journey through France.[31]

Thus stimulated and recommended, Augustin and his

[28] "Augustini sanctorumque fratrum a maternis visceribus monasterialis ecclesiæ avulserunt. . . . Nuntiatur quod gens quam peterent immanior belluis existeret." — Gotselinus, *Historia Maior*, c. 3, 6. "Perculsi timore inerti . . . ne tam periculosam, tam laboriosam, tam inutilem prædicationem adire deberent." — Bede, i. 23.

[29] "Quatenus etsi vobiscum laborare nequeo, simul in gaudio retributionis inveniar, quia laborare scilicet volo." — Bede, i. 23.

[30] 23d July, 596.

[31] *Epist.* vi. 53–59.

monks took courage and again set out upon their way. Their obedience won the victory which the magnanimous ardor of the great Gregory had failed to secure. They traversed the whole of France, ascending the Rhone and descending the Loire, protected by the princes and bishops to whom the Pope had recommended them, but not without suffering more than one insult at the hands of the lower orders, especially in Anjou, where these forty men, in pilgrim garb, walking together, resting sometimes at night under no other shelter than that of a large tree, were regarded as were-wolves, and were assailed (by the women particularly) with yellings and abuse.[32]

Augustin lands where previously Cæsar and the first Saxons had disembarked.

After having thus traversed the whole of Frankish Gaul, Augustin and his companions brought their journey to a close on the southern shore of Great Britain, at the point where it approaches nearest to the Continent, and where the previous conquerors of England had already landed: Julius Cæsar, who revealed it to the Roman world; and Hengist with his Saxons, who brought to it with its new name the ineffaceable impress of the Germanic race. To these two conquests, a third — destined to be the last — was now about to succeed. For it is impossible to place in the same rank the victorious invasions of the Danes and the Normans, who, akin to the Saxons in blood and manners, have indeed cruelly troubled the life of the English people, but have effected no radical change in its social and moral order, and have not been able to touch either its language, its religion, or its national character.

The new conquerors, like Julius Cæsar, arrived under the ensigns of Rome — but of Rome the Eternal, not the Imperial. They came to restore the law of the Gospel which the Saxons had drowned in blood. But in setting, forever, the seal of the Christian faith upon the soil of England, they struck no blow at the independent character and powerful originality of the people, whom, in converting them to the true faith, they succeeded in consolidating into a nation.

On the south side of the mouth of the River Thames, and at the north-east corner of the county of Kent, lies a district which is still called the Isle of Thanet, although the name of

[32] "Tot homines peregrinos pedestri incessu et habitu humiles quasi tot lupos et ignota monstra repulere. Mulierculæ simul conglomeratæ tanta . . . insania, tribulatu, despectu, subsannatione, derisione in sanctos Dei sunt debacchatæ. . . . Stabat juxta ulmus ampla . . . sub hac sancti volentes ipsa nocte requiescere." — GOTSELINUS, c. 10.

isle no longer befits it, as the arm of the sea which at one time separated it from the mainland is now little better than a brackish and marshy brook. There, where the steep white cliffs of the coast suddenly divide to make way for a sandy creek, near the ancient port of the Romans at Richborough, and between the modern towns of Sandwich and Ramsgate,[33] the Roman monks set foot for the first time on British soil.[34] The rock which received the first print of the footsteps of Augustin was long preserved and venerated, and was the object of many pilgrimages, in gratitude to the living God for having led thither the apostle of England.[35]

Immediately on his arrival the envoy of Pope Gregory despatched the interpreters, with whom he had been provided in France, to the king of the country in which the missionaries had landed, to announce to him that they came from Rome, and that they brought to him the best of news — the true glad tidings — the promise of celestial joy, and of an eternal reign in the fellowship of the living and true God.[36]

The king's name was Ethelbert, which means in Anglo-Saxon *noble* and *valiant*.[37] Great-grandson of Hengist, the first of the Saxon conquerors, who himself was supposed to be a descendant of one of the three sons of Odin, he reigned for thirty-six years over the oldest kingdom of the Heptarchy — that of Kent — and had just gained over all the other Saxon kings and princes, even to the confines of Northumbria, that kind of military supremacy which was attached to

[33] It is pleasant to know that in this same town of Ramsgate, on the shore where the Abbot Augustin landed, the sons of St. Benedict have been able, after the lapse of thirteen centuries, to erect a new sanctuary, near to a church dedicated to St. Augustin, designed and built by the liberality of the great Catholic architect Pugin. This monastic colony belongs to the new Benedictine province of Subiaco.

[34] In a book entitled *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, 1855. Dr. Stanley, Dean of Westminster, has examined and determined, with no less enthusiasm than scrupulous exactness, the facts relative to the arrival of St. Augustin. He has confirmed the already old opinion which fixes the very place of his landing at a farm now called *Ebbsfleet*, situated upon a promontory, from which the sea has now withdrawn.

[35] Stanley, p. 14. Oakley, *Life of St. Augustin*, 1844, p. 91. This life forms part of the interesting series of *Lives of the English Saints*, published by the principal writers of the Puseyite school before their conversion.

[36] "Mandavit se venisse de Roma et nuntium ferre optimum . . . æterna in cœlis gaudia et regnum sine fine cum Deo vivo et vero futurum." — Bede, i. 25.

[37] The root *Ethel*, which we shall find in almost all the names, male and female, which we shall quote, corresponds to the German adjective *edel*, noble.

the title of Bretwalda, or temporary chief of the Saxon Confederation.[38]

It was to be supposed that he would have a natural prepossession in favor of the Christian religion. Queen Bertha. It was the faith of his wife Bertha, who was the daughter of Caribert, king of the Franks of Paris, and grandson of Clovis, and whose mother was that Ingoberga whose gentle virtues and domestic troubles have been recorded by Gregory of Tours.[39] She had been affianced to the heathen king of the Saxons of Kent only on the condition that she should be free to observe the precepts and practices of her faith, under the care of a Gaulo-Frankish bishop, Liudhard of Senlis, who had remained with her until his death, which occurred immediately before the arrival of Augustin. Tradition records the gentle and lovable virtues of Queen Bertha, and her judicious zeal for the conversion of her husband and his subjects. It is believed to have been from her that Gregory received his information as to the desire of the English to be converted, with which he had enlisted the interest of Brunehaut and her sons.[40] The great-granddaughter of St. Clotilda seemed thus destined to be herself the St. Clotilda of England. But too little is known of her life: she has left but a brief and uncertain illumination on those distant and dark horizons over which she rises like a star, the herald of the sun of truth.

Meanwhile King Ethelbert did not immediately permit the Roman monks to visit him in the Roman city of Canterbury where he dwelt. While providing for their maintenance, he forbade their leaving the island on which they had landed until he had deliberated on the course he should pursue. At the close of some days he himself went to visit them, but he would not meet them except in the open air. It is difficult to imagine what pagan superstition made him dread foul play if he allowed himself to be brought under the same roof with the strangers. At the sound of his approach they advanced to meet him in procession.

"The history of the Church," says Bossuet,[41] "contains

[38] Bede, i. 25; ii. 3, 5.

[39] Greg. Turon., *Hist. Franc.*, iv. 26; ix. 26.

[40] "Quam ea conducere a parentibus acceperat, ut ritum fidei ac religionis suæ cum episcopo quem ei adjutorem fidei dederant, nomine Liudhardo, inviolatam servare licentiam haberet." — Bede, *loc. cit.* "Pervenit ad nos Anglorum gentem ad fidem Christianam Deo miserante desideranter velle converti." — S. Gregorii *Epist.*, vi. 58; compare *Epist.*, xi. 29.

[41] *Discours sur l'Histoire Universelle.*

nothing finer than the entrance of the holy monk Augustin into the kingdom of Kent with forty of his companions, who, preceded by the cross and the image of the great king our Lord Jesus Christ, offered their solemn prayers for the conversion of England." At that solemn moment when, upon a soil once Christian, Christianity found itself once more face to face with idolatry, the strangers besought the true God to save, with their own souls, all those souls for whose love they had torn themselves from their peaceful cloister at home, and had taken this hard enterprise in hand. They chanted the litanies in use at Rome in the solemn and touching strains which they had learnt from Gregory, their spiritual father and the father of religious music. At their head marched Augustin, whose lofty stature and patrician presence attracted every eye, for, like Saul, "he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards." [42]

The king, surrounded by a great number of his followers, received them seated under a great oak, and made them sit down before him. After having listened to the address which they delivered to him and to the assembly, he gave them a loyal, sincere, and, as we should say in these days, truly liberal answer. "You make fair speeches and promises," he said, "but all this is to me new and uncertain. I cannot all at once put faith in what you tell me, and abandon all that I, with my whole nation, have for so long a time held sacred. But since you have come from so far away to impart to us what you yourselves, by what I see, believe to be the truth and the supreme good, we shall do you no hurt: on the contrary, we shall show you all hospitality, and shall take care to furnish you with the means of living. We shall not hinder you from preaching your religion, and you shall convert whom you can." By these words the king intimated to them his desire to reconcile fidelity to the national customs, with a respect for liberty of conscience too rarely found in history. The Catholic Church thus met, from her first entrance into England, that promise of liberty which has during so many ages been the first and most fundamental article of all English charters and constitutions.

Faithful to his engagement, Ethelbert allowed the missionaries to follow him to Canterbury, where he assigned them a dwelling, which still exists under the name of the Stable

[42] "Beati Augustini formam et personam patriciam, staturam proceram et arduam, adeo ut a scapulis populo superemineret." — GOTSEL., *Vita*, c. 45.

Gate. The forty missionaries made a solemn entry into the town, carrying their silver cross, along with a picture of Christ painted on wood, and chanting in unison the response of their litany, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, by Thy pity, to spare in Thy wrath this city and Thy holy house, for we have sinned. Alleluia." It was thus, says a monastic historian, that the first fathers and teachers of the faith in England entered their future metropolis, and inaugurated the triumphant labors of the cross of Jesus.[43]

There was outside the town, to the east, a small church dedicated to St. Martin, dating from the time of the Romans, whither Queen Bertha was in the habit of going to pray, and to celebrate the offices of religion. Thither also went Augustin and his companions to chant their monastic office, to celebrate mass, to preach, and to baptize.[44] Here, then, we behold them, provided, thanks to the royal munificence, with the necessaries of life, endowed with the supreme blessing of liberty, and using that liberty in laboring to propagate the truth. They lived here, says the most truthful of their historians, the life of the apostles in the primitive Church — assiduous in prayer, in vigils, in fasts; they preached the word of life to all whom they could reach, and, despising this world's goods, accepting from their converts nothing beyond what was strictly necessary, lived in all harmony with their doctrine, and ever ready to suffer or to die for the truth they preached. The innocent simplicity of their life, and the heavenly sweetness of their doctrine, appeared to the Saxons arguments of an invincible eloquence; and every day the number of candidates for baptism increased.[45]

Such fair days occur at the outset of all great undertak-

[43] "Ad jussionem regis residentes, verbum Dei vitæ, una cum omnibus qui aderant ejus comitibus, prædicarent. . . . Pulchra sunt quidem verba et promissa, sed quia nova sunt et incerta. . . . Nec prohibemus quin omnes quos potestis fidei vestræ religionis prædicando societis. . . . Crucem pro vexilla ferentes argenteam et imaginem Domini salvatoris in tabula depictam, lætaniasque canentes. . . . Pro sua simul et eorum propter quos et ad quos venerant salute æterna . . . consona voce." — Bede, i. 25. "Tali devotione proto-doctoribus et in fide Christi proto-patribus Angliæ metropolim suam cum triumphali crucis labore ingredientibus: *Aperite portas*," &c. — Gotselinus, *Historia Minor de Vita S. Aug.*, c. 12.

[44] The existing church rebuilt in the thirteenth century, occupies the place of that which is forever consecrated by the double memory of Bertha the Queen and Augustin the Archbishop. The baptismal fonts are shown there in which, according to tradition, King Ethelbert was baptized by immersion.

[45] "Paratum ad patiendum adversa quæque, vel etiam ad moriendum animum habendo. . . . Mirantes simplicitatem innocentis vitæ ac dulcedinem doctrinæ eorum cœlestis." — Bede, i. 26.

The spring-time of the Church in England.

ings. They do not last, thanks to the lamentable and incurable infirmity of all human things; but yet they should never be forgotten nor remembered without honor. They are the blossoming time of noble lives. History serves no more salutary purpose than in transmitting their perfume to us. The Church of Canterbury for a thousand years possessed unparalleled splendors; no Church in the world, after the Church of Rome, has been governed by greater men, or has waged more glorious conflicts. But nothing in her brilliant annals could eclipse the sweet and pure light of that humble beginning, where a handful of strangers, Italian monks, sheltered by the generous hospitality of an honest-hearted king, and guided by the inspiration of the greatest of the Popes, applied themselves in prayer, and abstinence, and toil, to the work of winning over the ancestors of a great people to God, to virtue, and to truth.

Baptism of King Ethelbert.

The good and loyal Ethelbert did not lose sight of them; soon, charmed like so many others by the purity of their life, and allured by their promises, the truth of which was attested by more than one miracle, he sought and obtained baptism at the hand of Augustin. It was on Whit Sunday,[46] in the year of grace 597, that this Anglo-Saxon king entered into the unity of the Holy Church of Christ. Since the baptism of Constantine, and excepting that of Clovis, there had not been any event of greater moment in the annals of Christendom.[47]

A crowd of Saxons followed the example of their king, and the missionaries issued from their first asylumn to preach in all quarters, building churches also here and there. The king, faithful to the last to that noble respect for the individual conscience of which he had given proof even before he was a Christian, was unwilling to constrain any one to change his religion. He allowed himself to show no preference, save a deeper love for those who, baptized like himself, became his fellow-citizens in the heavenly kingdom. The Saxon king had learned from the Italian monks that no constraint is compatible with the service of Christ.[48] It was

[46] 2d June, 597.

[47] Stanley, p. 19.

[48] "Ipse etiam inter alios delectatus vita mundissima sanctorum et promissis . . . quæ vere esse miraculorum quoque multorum ostensione firmaverant. . . . Unitati se sanctæ Ecclesiæ Christi credendo sociare. Quorum fidei et conversioni ita congratulatus esse rex perhibetur, ut nullum tamen cogeret ad Christianismum: sed tantummodo credentes arctiori dilectione,

not to unite England to the Roman Church, it was in order to tear her from it, a thousand years after this, that another king and other apostles had to employ the torture and the stake.

In the meanwhile Augustin, perceiving that he should henceforward be at the head of an important Christian community, and in conformity to the Pope's instructions, returned to France in order to be there consecrated Archbishop of the English by the celebrated Metropolitan of Arles, Virgilius, the former abbot of Lerins, whom Gregory had appointed his vicar over all the churches of the Frankish kingdom. 25th Dec., 597.

On his return to Canterbury he found that the example of the king and the labors of his companions had borne fruit beyond all expectation; so much so, that at the festival of Christmas in the same year, 597, more than 10,000 Anglo-Saxons presented themselves for baptism; and that sacrament was administered to them in the Thames at the mouth of the Medway, opposite that Isle of Sheppey, where is now situated one of the principal stations of the British fleet, and one of the grand centres of the maritime power of Great Britain.[49]

The king's palace converted into a monastic cathedral.

The first of the converts was also the first of the benefactors of the infant Church. Ethelbert, more and more imbued with respect and devotion for the faith which he had embraced, desired to give a notable pledge of his pious humility by transferring to the new archbishop his own palace in the town of Canterbury, and establishing henceforth his royal residence at Reculver, an ancient Roman fortress on the adjacent shore of the island on which Augustin had landed. Beside the dwelling of the king thus transformed into a monastery for the archbishop and his monks, and on the site of an old church of the time of the Romans, a basilica which was hereafter to become, under the name of Christchurch, the metropolitan church of England, was commenced. Of this church Augustin was at once the first archbishop and the first abbot.[50]

quasi concives sibi regni cœlestis, amplecteretur. Didicerat enim a doctoribus auctoribusque suæ salutis, servitium Christi voluntarium, non coactitium esse debere." — Bede, i. 26. Yet Bede himself speaks, farther on, of those who had embraced the faith, "vel favore, vel timore regio." — ii. 5.

[49] S. Gregor., *Epist.*, viii. 30. Stanley, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[50] The immense cathedral of Canterbury, the reconstruction of which was begun by Lanfranc in the eleventh century, occupies the site of this earlier church and of the palace of Ethelbert.

The Pope had at first designed, as the seat of the new metropolis, the city of London, a Roman colony already famous from the time of the Emperors; whereas he had, perhaps, never heard the name of the residence of the Saxon kings at Canterbury. But London was not within the kingdom of Ethelbert, and the selection of the Pope could not prevail against the motives which determined Augustin to choose, as the head and centre of the religious life of England, the capital of the king who had become his proselyte and his friend, standing, as it did, in the region where he had first landed on British soil, and whose inhabitants had welcomed him with such genial sympathy.[51]

Abbey of St. Augustin at Canterbury.

But the splendors and the influence of the official metropolis were for long ages to be eclipsed, in the opinion of the English people, and of the Christian world, by another foundation, equally owing its origin to Augustin and Ethelbert, the first archbishop and the first Christian king of England. To the west of the royal city, and half-way to that Church of St. Martin whither the queen went to pray, and where the king had been baptized, Augustin, always on the outlook for any traces which the old faith had left in Britain, discovered the site of a church which had been transformed into a pagan temple, and encircled with a sacred wood. Ethelbert gave up to him the temple, with all the ground surrounding it. The archbishop forthwith restored it to its original use as a church, and dedicated it to St. Pancras, a young Roman martyr, whose memory was dear to the Italian monks, because the Monastery of Mount Cœlius, whence they had all come, and where their father Gregory was born, had been built upon lands formerly belonging to his family. Round this new sanctury Augustin-raised another monastery, of which Peter, one of his companions, was the first abbot, and which he intended to be the place of his own burial, after the Roman custom which placed the cemeteries out of the towns, and by the side of the highroads. He consecrated this new foundation in the names of the apostles of Rome, Peter and Paul; but it was under his own name that this famous abbey became one of the most opulent and most revered sanctuaries of Christendom. It was for several centuries the burying-place of the kings and primates of England,[52] and at the same time the

[51] Gregor., *Epist*, xi. 65. Willelm. Malmesburiensis, *De Gest. Reg.*, i. c. 4, and *De Dorobernensibus Episcopis*, p. 111.

[52] Ecclesiastical historians abound in testimonies of admiration for this

first and brighest centre of religious and intellectual life in the south of Great Britain.

Seven years were needed to complete the monastery, the church attached to which could not even be dedicated during the lifetime of him whose name it was to assume and preserve. But some months before his death, Augustin had the satisfaction of seeing the foundation of the first Benedictine monastery in England sanctioned by the solemn ratification of the king and the chiefs of the nation whom he had converted.

The charter of this monastery has been brought to light in our day as the oldest authentic record of the religious and political history of England.[53] Our readers will thank us for quoting the text and the signatures of the witnesses. The Anglo-Saxon king appears in this transaction at once as a Christian prince and as the chief of the aristocratic assembly whose consent was necessary to the validity of all his deeds.[54] He begins thus: — 9th Jan., 605.

immense house, whose patrimony extended to 11,860 acres of land, and whose façade was 250 feet long. Perhaps one could read on that façade these verses quoted by a chronicler, and which recall the inscription on the front of St. John Lateran at Rome: —

"Hoc caput Anglorum datur esse monasteriorum
Regum cunctorum fons pontificumque sacrorum."

The abbot of St. Augustin of Canterbury received from Pope Leo IX. in 1055, the privilege of sitting in the first place after the abbot of Mount Cassino, in the general councils. The *Monasticon Anglicanum* of Dugdale, vol. i. p. 23, gives a very curious view of the state of the ruins of this abbey, towards the middle of the seventeenth century; a great tower, called Ethelbert's, but built much later than his time, can still be distinguished. In the *Vestiges of Antiquities at Canterbury*, by T. Hastings, 1813, folio, there are plates representing in great detail the remains, still considerable, but cruelly profaned and neglected, which existed in 1812 — the best preserved portion used as a brewery, and beside it a tavern with an enclosure used for cock-fights. It has been restored recently, to a certain extent, thanks to the munificence of Mr. Beresford Hope, and is used at present as a seminary for the Anglican missions. The house has had several historians, among others William Thorne (*de Spina*), who was abbot about 1358, and chiefly Thomas de Elmham, treasurer of the monastery in 1407, whose chronicle was edited by Mr. Hardwick in 1858, for the collection of *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores*.

[53] The authenticity of this deed has been admitted by one of the most learned and competent critics of our day, Sir Francis Palgrave, *Rise and Progress of the British Commonwealth*, vol. ii. pp. 215-18. Kemble, again, in his *Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici*, vol. i. p. 2, has published it with the asterisk which marks documents suspected or false; but he nowhere enters into any justification of this sentence.

[54] "Convocato ibidem concilio communi, tam cleri quam populi, omnium et singulorum approbatione et consensu, monasterium . . . monachis hic perpetuo Deo servituris . . . cum dotatione, confirmatione ac perpetua libertate donavit." — Elmham, p. 111.

"I, Ethelbert, king of Kent, with the consent of the venerable archbishop Augustin, and of my nobles, give and concede to God, in honor of St. Peter, a certain portion of the land which is mine by right, and which lies to the east of the town of Canterbury, to the end that a monastery may be built thereon, and that the properties hereinafter named may be in full possession of him who shall be appointed thereof. Wherefore I swear and ordain, in the name of Almighty God, who is the just and sovereign judge, that the land thus given is given forever — that it shall not be lawful either for me or for my successors to take any part of it whatsoever from its possessors; and if any one attempt to lessen or to annul our gift, that he be in this life deprived of the holy communion of the body and blood of Christ, and at the day of judgment cut off from the company of the saints.

"† I, Ethelbert, king of the English, have confirmed this gift, by my own hand, with the sign of the holy cross.

"† I, Augustin, by the grace of God archbishop, have freely subscribed.

"† I, Eadbald, son of the king, have adhered.

"† I, Hamigisile, duke, have approved.

"† I, Hocca, earl, have consented.

"† I, Angemundus, referendary, have approved.

"† I, Graphio, earl, have said it is well.

"† I, Tangisile, *regis optimas*, have confirmed.

"† I, Pinca, have consented.

"† I, Geddi, have corroborated." [55]

[55] "Ego Ethelbertus, rex Cantiæ, cum consensu venerabilis archiepiscopi Augustini," &c. — KEMBLE, *loc. cit.* The deeds of gift executed by the Anglo-Saxon kings always announce the consent, *ducum, comitum, optimatumque*, and are always signed by the counts and principal lords, or by the bishops and abbots; the formula *Fari*, or *consensi*, or *approbavi*, often accompanies the proper name, which is always preceded by a cross: †. This cross did not occupy the place of the signature, as has been represented, nor did it at all indicate that the subscriber could not write. Kemble, in a note to his preface, p. 91, seems to indicate that the two signatures of Angemundus and Graphio, with the accompanying qualifications, warrant him in ranking the whole deed in the list of apocryphal documents. Palgrave gives, after Somner's *Canterbury*, p. 47, another text with the same title, where the signatures, arranged in the same order, are not accompanied with any qualification. He proves elsewhere, p. 214, that the most disputed of the Anglo-Saxon documents have almost always some authentic deeds as their basis, the original authenticity of which ought not to be called in question on account of real or apparent anachronisms resulting from subsequent amplifications or alterations. Almost all the Anglo-Saxon deeds that we can still read are strongly confirmed, according to him, by what he calls their internal evidence. These charters rest on history, which in its turn rests on them; each thus confirming the other.

CHAPTER II.

HOW POPE GREGORY AND BISHOP AUGUSTIN GOVERNED THE NEW CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Joy of Gregory on learning the success of the monks. — His letters to Augustin; to the patriarch of Alexandria; to Queen Bertha. — A new monastic colony sent out. — Letter to the king. — Advice to Augustin regarding his miracles. — Opinion of Burke. — Answer of Gregory to the questions of Augustin. — The Pope's arrangements for the heathen; his admirable moderation. — Supremacy over the British bishops accorded to Augustin. — Opposition of the Welsh Celts. — Nature of the dissensions which separated the British from the Roman Church. — Celebration of Easter. — Origin and insignificance of the religious dispute. — It is increased and complicated by patriotic antipathy to the Saxons. — First conference between Augustin and the British. — Miracle of the blind man. — Second conference; rupture. — The abbot of Bangor. — Augustin's threatening prediction concerning the monks of Bangor fulfilled by the fierce Ethelfrid of Northumbria. — Sequel of Augustin's mission. — He is insulted by the fishermen of Dorsetshire. — Foundation of King Ethelbert. — Bishops of London and of Rochester. — Laws of Ethelbert; the first reduced to writing. — Guarantee given to the Church property. — Death of Gregory and Augustin.

Joy of St. Gregory on learning the success of his monks.

Some time before this solemn national consecration of his work, and after the first year of his mission, Augustin had sent to Rome two of his companions — Lawrence, who was to succeed him as archbishop, and Peter, who was to be the first abbot of the new monastery of St. Peter and St. Paul — to announce to the Pope the great and good news of the conversion of the king, with his kingdom of Kent; next, to demand from him new assistants in the work, the harvest being great and the laborers but few; and, lastly, to consult him on eleven important and delicate points touching the discipline and the management of the new Church.

The joy of Gregory when, in the midst of the perils and trials of the Church, and of his own sufferings, material and moral, he saw the realization of his soul's most cherished dream, may be understood. The boldest of his projects was crowned with success. A new people had been brought into the fold of the Church through his gentle but persevering activity. Till the end of the world, innumerable souls would

owe to him their admission to the great brotherhood of souls here below — to the eternal joys that are above. He could not foresee the great men, the famous saints, the immense resources, the dauntless champions, that England was to furnish to the Catholic Church: but neither had he the sorrow of foreknowing the sad revolt which was yet to rob so much glory of its lustre, nor that base ingratitude which has dared to despise or to underrate, in his case as in that of his subordinates, the incomparable blessings which he conferred on the people of England by sending to them the light of the Gospel.

The joy of Gregory, as pure as it was natural, infused its spirit into that vast correspondence in which he has left us so faithful an image of his mind and of his life. To Augustin, as might have been expected, its first overflow was directed. "Glory be to God in the highest," he writes — "glory to that God who would not reign alone in heaven, whose death is our life, whose weakness is our strength, whose suffering cures our sufferings, whose love sends us to seek even in the island of Britain for brothers whom we knew not, whose goodness causes us to find those whom we sought for while yet we knew them not![56] Who can express the exultation of all faithful hearts, now that the English nation, through the grace of God and thy brotherly labor, is illumined by the Divine light, and tramples under foot the idols which it ignorantly worshipped, in order that it may now bow down before the true God?" He then hastened to re-echo into the East the happy news which had reached him from the extreme West. He writes to the patriarch of Alexandria: "The bearer of your letters found me sick and leaves me sick. But God grants to me gladness of heart to temper the bitterness of my bodily sufferings.[57] The flock of the holy Church grows and multiplies; the spiritual harvests gather in the heavenly garners. . . . You announced to me the conversion of your heretics — the concord of your faithful people. . . . I make you a return in kind, because I know you will rejoice in my joy, and that you have aided me with your prayers. Know, then, that the nation of the Angles, situated at the extremest *angle* of the world,[58] had till now continued in idolatry, worshipping stocks and stones.

[56] "Ne solus regnaret in cœlo, cujus morte vivimus, cujus infirmitate roboramur, cujus passione a passione eripimur, cujus amore in Britannia fratres quærimus quos ignorabamus." — *Epist.*, xi. 28.

[57] "Ægrum me reperit, ægrum reliquit . . . quatenus mentis lætitia immanitatem meæ molestiæ temperaret." — *Epist.*, viii. 30, ad Eulogium.

[58] "Gens *Anglorum*, in mundi *angulo* posita suo." — *Epist.*, viii. 30, ad Eulogium. Always this singular taste for puns!

God inspired me to send thither a monk of my monastery here, to preach the Gospel to them. This monk, whom I caused to be ordained bishop by the Frankish bishops, has penetrated to this nation at the uttermost ends of the earth; and I have now received tidings of the happy success of his enterprise. He and his companions have wrought miracles that seem to come near to those of the apostles themselves, and more than 10,000 English have been baptized by them at one time."

After having thus quickened the zeal of the Egyptian patriarch by these tidings from England, he turns to the queen of the newly converted nation — Bertha, born a Christian, and the granddaughter of a saint — to congratulate her on the conversion to her own faith of her husband and her people, and to encourage her to new efforts by telling her that she was remembered in the prayers of the faithful, not only at Rome, but at Constantinople, and that the fame of her good works had reached the ears of the most serene Emperor himself. "Our very dear sons, Lawrence the priest and Peter the monk, he writes to her, "have rehearsed to me, on their arrival here, all that your Majesty has done for our reverend brother and cobishop Augustin — all the comfort and the charity that you have so liberally bestowed on him. We bless the Almighty, who has seen meet to reserve for you the conversion of the English nation. Even as He found in the glorious Helena, mother of the most pious Constantine, an instrument to win over the hearts of the Romans to the Christian faith, so we feel assured will His mercy, through your agency, work out the salvation of the English. Already, for a long time, it must have been your endeavor to turn, with the prudence of a true Christian, the heart of her husband towards the faith which you profess, for his own well being and for that of his kingdom. Well-instructed and pious as you are, this duty should not have been to you either tedious or difficult. If you have in any wise neglected it, you must redeem the lost time. Strengthen in the mind of your noble husband his devotion to the Christian faith; pour into his heart the love of God; inflame him with zeal for the complete conversion of his subjects, so that he may make an offering to Almighty God by your love and your devotion I pray God that the completion of your work may make the angels in heaven feel the same joy which I already owe to you on earth." [59]

[59] "Qualis erga R. fratrem . . . gloria vestra exstiterit, quantaque illi

About the same time, in revising his commentaries on the Scriptures, and his exposition of the Book of Job, he cannot help adding then this cry of triumph: "Look at that Britain whose tongue has uttered only savage sounds, but now echoes the Hallelujah of the Hebrews! Behold that furious sea — it gently smoothes itself beneath the feet of the saints! These savage clans, that the princes of the earth could not subdue by the sword — see them enchained by the simple word of the priests! That people which, while yet pagan, defied undauntedly the arms and the renown of our soldiers, trembles at the speech of the humble and weak. It knows fear now, but it is the fear of sin; and all its desires are centred on the glory everlasting."[60]

A new monastic colony sent over.

Far, however, from resting indolently in this joy, he remained to his latest day faithful to the warm and active interest with which his beloved England had inspired him.[61] He sent to Augustin a new monastic colony, provided with relics, sacred vessels, priestly robes, the ornaments of the altar, and all that was necessary to give effect to the pomp of religious service. He sent also books, which were intended to form the nucleus of an ecclesiastical library.[62]

23d June, 601.

At the head of this new swarm of monks was a man of noble birth, by name Mellitus, and his companion Justus, who were to succeed each other on the met-

solatia vel qualem charitatem impenderit, retulerunt. . . . Postquam et recta fide gloria vestra munita et litteris docta est, hoc vobis nec tardum nec debuit esse difficile." — *Epist.*, v. 29. It will be observed that this letter is placed in the catalogue of the pontifical correspondence apart from the other letters which Gregory addressed to the husband of Bertha, as well as to the princes and bishops in order to recommend to them the new assistants of Augustin.

[60] "Ecce lingua Britanniæ quæ nil aliud noverat quam barbarum frendere, jamdudum in divinis laudibus Hebræum cœpit alleluia sonare. Ecce tumidus quondam, jam substratus pedibus sanctorum, servit Oceanus. . . . Qui catervas pugnantium infidelis nequaquam metuerat, jam nunc fidelis humilium linguam timet . . . ut prave agere metuat ac totis desideriis ad æternitatis gloriam pervenire concupiscat." — S. GREG., *Moral.*, book xxviii. c. 11.

[61] "Semper pro amatis Anglis vigilantissimus." — GOTSELINUS, *Hist. Maior*, c. 24.

[62] "Nec non et codices plurimos." — BEDE, i. 29. Many of the books sent to Augustin by the hands of the abbot Peter were carefully preserved, and escaped the ravages of time for six centuries. In the days of Henry VIII. Leland still speaks of them with admiration: "Majusculis literis Romanis more veterum scriptis . . . incredibilem præ se ferentes antiquitatis majestatem." An old catalogue of this first consignment of books ends with these words: "This is the origin of the library of the whole English Church." — A. D. 601. In the library of the college of Corpus Christi, at Cambridge, a Latin MS. of the four evangelists is preserved, which, according to an old tradition, is the copy brought from Rome by St. Augustin in 596.

ropolitan throne of Canterbury, and with them Paulinus, the future apostle of Northumbria. The Pope provided them with very urgent letters, all of the same date, for Queen Brunehaut, for her grandsons, kings Theodebert and Theodoric; for their rival king Clotaire of Neustra,[63] who had treated Augustin with great kindness, and heartily seconded his enterprise; and for the bishops of Arles, Lyons, Gap, Toulon, Marseilles, Châlons, Paris, Rouen, and Angers — thus marking beforehand the possible halting-places of the new missionaries.[64]

In a special letter to Virgilius, the legate at Arles, he recommends him most particularly to receive their common brother, Augustin, with the greatest affection, in the event of his visiting him; and he adds: "As it often happens that those who are at a distance need to be made aware of disorders which require to be repressed, if he should inform you of faults on the part of his priests or others, examine everything along with him with the minutest care, and act with the greatest strictness, but ever be heedful that you do not let the innocent suffer with the guilty."[65]

The passionate yet intelligent and impartial tenderness towards his friends, which is one of the most attractive features in Gregory's admirable character, is nowhere more beautifully displayed than in his relations with Augustin. We see him ever engaged in extending and consolidating the authority of his envoy; but not the less anxious for the welfare of his soul, and resolute to give precedence before all else to the interests of the newly Christianized country. He intrusted to the new missionaries a long letter addressed to King Ethelbert, in which, while congratulating him on his conversion, and comparing him to Constantine, as he had compared Bertha to St. Helena, he exhorted him to spread the faith among his subjects — to forbid the worship of idols, to overthrow their temples and to establish good morals by exhortations, kindnesses, and threats, but above all by his own example. He adds: "You have with you our very reverend brother, bishop Augustin, trained according to the monastic rule, full of the knowledge of the Scriptures, abounding in good works in the sight of God. Hearken

[63] *Epist.*, xi. 61, ad Clotarium Francorum regem.

[64] *Epist.*, xi. 54–62. Compare Bede, i. 29.

[65] "Si communem fratrem Augustinum episcopum ad nos venire contigerit, ita illum dilectio vestra, sicut decet, affectuose dulciterque suscipiat, ut et ipsum consolationis suæ bono refoveat, et alios, qualiter fraterna charitas colenda sit, doceat." — *Epist.*, xi. 68.

devoutly to him, and faithfully accomplish all that he tells you; for the more you listen to what he will tell you on the part of God, the more will God grant his prayers when he prays to Him on your behalf. Attach yourself, then, to him with all the strength of your mind, and all the fervor of faith; and second his efforts with all the force that God has given you."[66]

The same day, in a public letter, he confers on Augustin the right of bearing the *pallium* in celebrating mass, as a reward for having established the new English Church. This honor was to descend to all his successors on the archiepiscopal throne.[67] He constitutes him metropolitan of twelve bishoprics, which he enjoins him to erect in southern England. He gives him authority to appoint whom he will metropolitan bishop in the ancient Roman and episcopal city of York, subordinating to the see of York twelve new bishoprics yet to be erected, but reserving to Augustin during his lifetime the supremacy over the northern metropolitan. Over and above all the bishops to be ordained by him or by the future bishop of York in the conquered territory, Gregory places under the jurisdiction of Augustin all the bishops of Britain, "in order," says the Pope, "that they may learn by your word and by your life how they must believe, and how they must live, in order to fulfil their office and gain an inheritance in heaven."[68] He here treats of the bishops who were established in Wales, or who had fled thither for refuge — the prelates and teachers of the Christian Celtic populations which had escaped the Saxon yoke.

But while he thus openly evidenced the fulness of his confidence and the authority with which he invested Augustin, he addressed to him, in secret, advices meant to preserve him from the dangerous snare of pride. "In our joy," he wrote, "there is much to fear. I know, beloved brother,

[66] "Fanorum ædificia everte, subditorum mores ex magna vitæ munditia, exhortando, terrendo, blandiendo, corrigendo et boni operis exempla monstrando, ædifica. . . . Augustinus episcopus, in monasterii regula edoctus." *Epist.*, xi. 66. It is surprising to find in this beautiful letter a paragraph warning the Saxon king that the end of the world is at hand — that he must watch for it day by day, and not be astonished, seeing that it is near, at marvellous things which are about to happen in England as elsewhere.

[67] Since the schism of Henry VIII., the English archbishops of Canterbury, by the strangest of anomalies, have still preserved this *pallium* in the arms of their see.

[68] "Quatenus ex lingua et vita tuæ sanctitatis, et recte credendi et bene vivendi formam percipiant, atque officium fide ac moribus exsequentes, ad cœlestia, cum Dominus voluerit, regna pertingant." — *Epist.*, xi. 65.

that God has by thee wrought great miracles in this nation. It is right to rejoice that the minds of the English are drawn by visible miracles to the invisible grace; but we ought to fear lest these prodigies incline the weak mind to presumption, and make the inner man fall to a worse depth through vainglory than he is raised up outwardly. When the disciples said to their divine Master, 'Lord, in thy name even the devils are subject unto us,' he answered them, 'Rejoice not because the devils are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' The names of all the elect are written there, and yet all the elect work not miracles. And while God thus acts outwardly by thee, thou oughtest, brother beloved, to judge thyself scrupulously within, and to know well what thou art. If thou remembrest that thou hast offended God by word or deed, have thy faults ever present to thy memory to repress the vainglory which may rise in thy heart. Reflect that this gift of miracles is not given to thee for thyself, but for those whose salvation is committed to thee. The reprobate have wrought miracles; and we, we know not even if we are among the elect. It is needful, then, sternly to humble and subdue the mind in the midst of all these prodigies and signs, lest it should seek in them only its own glory and its private advantage. God has given us but one sign whereby we may know his elect: it is this, that we have love one to another."[69]

Immediately after, to reassure the friend whom he had thus corrected, by a return to his wonted tenderness and sympathy, he continues in these terms: "I speak thus because I desire to subdue to humility the soul of my dear hearer. But let even thy humility have confidence. All sinful as I am, I have a sure hope that all thy sins will be remitted unto thee, inasmuch as thou hast been chosen to bring to others the remission of their sins. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance, what joy must not there be over a great nation which, in coming to the true faith, repents of all the evil it has done! And it is thou who hast given this joy to heaven."[70]

[69] Fleury, in quoting this letter, says with justice, "Nothing proves more completely the truth of St. Augustin's miracles than these serious counsels of Gregory."

[70] "Hæc autem dico quia auditoris mei animum in humilitate sternere cupio. Sed ipsa tua humilitas habeat fiduciam suam. Nam peccator ego spem certissimam teneo." — *Epist.*, xi. 28.

In one of Gregory's former letters, addressed, not to Augustin, but to his friend Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, the Pope also refers to the miracles which had signalized the mission of Augustin; he does not hesitate even to compare them to the signs and wonders which accompanied the preaching of the apostles.[71] Twelve centuries after Gregory, the greatest genius that modern England has produced, the immortal Burke, bows respectfully before that tradition, misunderstood by his frivolous contemporaries. The introduction of Christianity into any country whatsoever is, according to him, the most inestimable benefit that can be conferred on humanity. Why, then, in view of an end so worthy, should not Providence itself sometimes directly interpose? Miracles, of old time accepted with a blind credulity, have been since rejected with "as undistinguishing a disregard." "But," adds the great orator, "it is the reality or opinion of such miracles that was the principal cause of the early acceptance and rapid progress of Christianity in this island."[72] It is singular that neither Bede nor any other historian gives the least detail of these wonders which awoke at once the admiration, the gratitude, and the prudent deprecations of St. Gregory the Great. But of all possible miracles, the greatest is assuredly "to have detached from paganism without violence a violent people; to have introduced it into the Christian commonwealth, not man by man, and family by family, but at one stroke, with its kings, its warlike nobility, and all its institutions."[73] This king, who believes himself descended from the gods of the Scandinavian paradise, yet who resigns his capital to the priests of the crucified God; this people, fierce and idolatrous, which by thousands prostrates itself at the feet of a few foreign monks, and by thousands plunges into the icy waters of the Thames, in mid winter, to receive baptism from these unknown strangers; this rapid and complete transformation of a proud and victorious, and at the same time sensual and rapacious race, by means of a doctrine pre-eminently fitted to quell lust, pride, and sensuality, and which, once received into these savage hearts, rests forever implanted there, — is not this, of all miracles, the most marvellous, as it is the most indisputable?

[71] "Tantis miraculis vel ipse vel hi qui cum ipso transmissi sunt in gente eadem coruscant, ut apostolorum virtutes in signis, quæ perhibent, imitari videantur." — *Epist.*, viii. 30.

[72] Burke, *Essay towards an Abridgment of English History*, book ii. ch. 1.

[73] Ozanam, p. 159.

Answer of Gregory to the questions of Augustin: true law of Catholic missions.

Finally, after all these letters, Gregory wrote a very long and very detailed answer to the eleven questions which Augustin had put to him, as to the principal difficulties which he had encountered, or which he foresaw might still be met with in the course of his mission. To convey a just idea of this reply, which is an admirable monument of enlightenment, of conciliatory reason, of gentleness, wisdom, moderation, and prudence, and which was destined to become, as has been most justly said, the rule and the code of Christian missions,[74] it would have to be quoted entire; but besides its extreme length, it embraces certain details from which our modern prudery recoils. Here, however, is the substance of its most important passages.

The Pope, consulted as to the use and the division to be made of the offerings of the faithful, reminds Augustin that the revenues of the Church should be divided into four portions; the first for the bishop and his family, because of the hospitality which he ought to exercise; the second for the clergy; the third for the poor; the fourth for the maintenance and repair of churches. "But you," he says to the archbishop — "you who have been brought up in monastic discipline, ought not to live apart from your clergy, but to initiate in the new English Church the life in common which our fathers practised in the primitive Church." [75]

Why, asked Augustin, are there divers customs in the Church, when the faith is one? and why does the liturgy according to which the mass is celebrated in the churches of Gaul (which Bertha probably followed in her oratory of St. Martin), differ from that of the Roman Church?

"You, my brother," replies the Pope, "know the usage of the Roman Church, in which you cannot forget that you were brought up. But if it should happen that you find in the Church of Rome, or in that of Gaul, or in any other, some usage which you believe to be more pleasing to God, I enjoin you to select it with care, and give it a place in the new Church of England. For institutions are not to be loved because of the places whence they are derived; but rather are places to be beloved for the sake of the good institutions that

[74] Ozanam, *Civilisation Chrétienne chez les Francs*, p. 154.

[75] "Interrogatio beati Augustini episcopi Cantuariorum Ecclesiæ. . . . Respondit Gregorius papa urbis Romæ. . . . Tua fraternitas monasterii, regulis erudita, seorsum vivere non debet a clericis suis." — Bede, i. 27. Greg., *Epist.*, xi. 64.

exist therein. Choose therefore among the Churches all that is pious and reasonable, and out of what you thus collect form the use of the English Church." [76]

In these words it is easy to recognize the pontiff who had already braved the criticisms of some petty spirits, by introducing at Rome various usages that were believed to be borrowed from Constantinople, and who had said to his critics, "I shall be always ready to deter my subordinates from evil, but to imitate them in good, borrowing it from it matters not what Church. He is but a fool who could make his primacy a reason for disdaining to learn whatever good can be learnt." [77]

Consulted as to the punishment to be inflicted on sacrilegious robbers, and as to the administration of the Roman law, which imposed on the robber a double or fourfold restitution, Gregory advises that, in the punishment, the poverty or the riches of the depredator be taken into account: and that it be administered always with a fatherly love and a moderation which shall keep the mind within the limits of reason. As to restitution — "God forbid," said he, "that the Church should seek to gain by what she has lost, and to draw a profit from the folly of men." [78]

Augustin had further inquired what rule he should follow in regard to marriages within the forbidden degrees, to the duties of the married state, and how much ought to be retained of the purifications prescribed to women by the Mosaic law. Gregory, in reply, interdicts absolutely marriages between mothers-in-law and sons-in-law, which were common among the Saxons: as also between brothers and sisters-in-law. But, for the latter case, he does not require that converts, who had contracted such marriages before their conversion, should be deprived of the holy communion, "lest,"

[76] "Novit fraternitas tua Romanæ Ecclesiæ consuetudinem in qua se meminit eruditam. Sed mihi placet, sive in Romana, sive Galliarum, seu in qualibet Ecclesia, aliquid invenisti quod plus omnipotenti Deo possit placere, sollicite eligas, et in Anglorum Ecclesiæ quæ adhuc ad fidem nova est, institutione præcipua, quæ de multis Ecclesiis colligere potuisti, infundas. Non enim pro locis res, sed pro bonis rebus loci amandi sunt. Ex singulis ergo quibusque Ecclesiis quæ pia, quæ religiosa, quæ recta sunt, elige: et hæc quasi in fasciculum collecta, apud Anglorum mentes in consuetudinem depone."

[77] "Si quid boni vel ipsa vel altera Ecclesia habet, ego et minores meos quos ab illicitis prohibeo in bono imitari paratus sum. Stultus est enim qui in eo se primum existimat, ut bona quæ viderit discere contemnat." — *Epist.*, x. 12, ad Joann., Syracus. Episc.

[78] "Ita ut mens extra rationis regulam omnino nihil faciat. . . . Absit ut Ecclesia cum augmento recipiat quod de terrenis rebus videtur amittere, et lucra de vanis quærere."

he says, "you should appear to punish them for what they have done in mere ignorance; for there are things which the Church corrects with strictness, and there are others which, for kindness' sake, she tolerates, or prudently overlooks; but always in such wise as to restrain the evil which she bears with, or winks at." He would, in general, treat the English as St. Paul treated his converts — nourishing them not on solid food, but with milk, as newborn babes. Further on "he prescribes to the marriage bed these severe laws which secure health and vigor and the fruitfulness of the Christian family."[79] He does not permit that the woman who has just borne a child should be excluded from the Church, and that thus her suffering should be made a crime.

But he protests with energy against the unnatural custom of mothers who will not be nurses, and who disdain to suckle the children they have brought forth. He sought thus to impress upon the heart of the Saxon woman all a wife's duties, while at the same time he marked her proper place in the Christian family by exalting her dignity and protecting her modesty.[80]

New concessions of Gregory in a letter to the Abbot Mellitus.

Reflection only served to confirm the Pope in this wise and generous indulgence towards the new converts, allied, as it was in him, with a zeal at once pure and ardent for the service and progress of the truth. Scarce had he addressed to Ethelbert the letter in which he exhorted him to destroy the temples of the ancient national worship, when he reconsidered the matter, and a few days later despatched entirely different instructions to Mellitus, the chief of the new mission, whom he had designated abbot, and to whom he had intrusted the letter for the king — hoping to overtake him on his journey. "Since your departure and that of your company," he writes, "I have been much disquieted, for I have learnt nothing of the success of your journey. But when Almighty God shall have carried you in safety to our most reverend brother Augustin, say to him that, after having long revolved in my own mind the

[79] Ozanam, *op. cit.*, 161.

[80] "In hoc enim tempore sancta Ecclesia quædam per fervorem corrigit, quædam per mansuetudinem tolerat, quædam per considerationem dissimulat, atque ita portat et dissimulat, ut sæpe malum quod adversatur portando et dissimulando compescat. . . . Si enixam mulierem prohibemus ecclesiam intrare, ipsam ei pœnam suam in culpam deputamus. . . . Prava autem in conjugatorum moribus consuetudo surrexit, ut mulieres . . . dum se continere nolunt, despiciunt lactare quos gignunt." — *Ibid.* Compare *Epist.* xiv. 17, ad Felicem Messanensem Episcopum

affairs of the English, I have come to the conclusion that it is not necessary to overthrow all the temples of the idols, but only the idols that are in them. After having sprinkled these temples with holy water, let altars and relics be placed in them; for if they are strongly built, it were well that they were made to pass from the worship of demons to the service of the true God — to the end that the people, seeing that their temples are not destroyed, may the more readily accept the religious change and come to adore God in the places familiar to them. And as it is their custom to slay many oxen in sacrifices to the demons, some solemnity which should take the place of this sacrifice must be established. On the day of the dedication, or on the feast of the martyrs whose relics may be given to them, they may be permitted to make huts of leaves around the temples thus changed into churches, and celebrate the feast with social repasts. But in place of sacrificing beasts to a demon, they will kill them only to be eaten with thankfulness to God who provides their food; and thus, by leaving to them some of the enjoyments of the senses, they will be more easily led to desire the joys of the soul. For it is impossible to change all at once the whole habits of the savage mind: a mountain is not climbed by leaps and bounds, but step by step."[81]

Among the enemies of the Roman Church, pedants and hypercritics are found to accuse St. Gregory of having compromised matters with his conscience in thus opening the entrance of the sanctuary to paganism. Far from sympathizing with them, let us, on the contrary, learn to admire the great and wise teacher who could so well distinguish the essential from the accidental, and who, repudiating the pretensions of minute and vexatious uniformity, and sacrificing the pettiness of prejudice to the majesty of a great design, could thus develop the worship of the truth even among the superstitions of Germanic paganism. Let us admire above all, "a religion which penetrates thus to the depths of human nature — which knows what needful combats against his passions it demands from man, and which has no desire to impose unnecessary sacrifices upon him. The only way of

[81] "Post discessum congregationis vestræ quæ tecum est, valde sumus suspensi redditi, quia nihil de prosperitate vestri itineris audisse nos contigit. . . . Dicite ei quid diu mecum de causa Anglorum cogitans tractavi. . . . Nam duris mentibus simul omnia abscidere impossibile esse non dubium est, quia et is qui summum locum ascendere nitetur, gradibus vel passibus, non saltibus elevatur." — *Epist.*, xi. 76.

knowing human nature is to love it, and it can be won only at this price." [82]

Supremacy accorded to Augustin over the British bishops.

In his last question Augustin had asked how he — as yet the only bishop among the English — should deal by the bishops of Gaul and Britain. Gregory admonishes him not to keep at a distance the bishops of Gaul who might wish to be present at his ordinations of new bishops in England, "for to conduct successfully spiritual affairs it is lawful to draw lessons from temporal affairs; and as, in the world, persons already married are invited together to take part in the festivities of a wedding, so nothing forbids the participation of bishops already ordained in that ordination which is the espousal of man with God." The Pope added: "We do not assign to you any authority over the bishops of Gaul, and you can reform them only through persuasion and good example, except at the risk of thrusting your sickle into another's harvest. As to the British bishops, we commit them entirely to your care, that you may instruct the ignorant, strengthen the feeble, and correct the evil." [83]

Gregory, who knew so well how to read the hearts and win the minds of men, could have only a very imperfect knowledge of the geography as well as of the political condition of Great Britain. He seems to have held on that subject the antiquated notions which prevailed at Rome regarding an island which had been the first to escape from the imperial yoke. He evidently had no idea of the national and only too legitimate antipathy which inflamed the Christian Brittons against the heathen Saxons, who had for a century and a half overrun, ravaged, and usurped their country. He imagined that those Christians, always faithfully united to the Roman Church, who had so energetically repudiated Pelagianism, and whose bishops had sat in the ancient councils presided over by the legates of Rome, would lend a cordial support to the mission of the Roman monks, commissioned by him to evangelize the Saxons. He did not know the implacable hate of the conquered for the conquerors; and he forgot certain points of difference which, though they did not touch the great verities of the Christian faith, and were completely removed from all idea of a national or schismatic

[82] Ozanam, *Œuvres*, i. 167.

[83] "Nam in ipsis rebus spiritualibus ut sapienter et mature disponantur, exemplum trahere a rebus etiam carnalibus possumus. . . . Britannorum omnes episcopos tuæ fraternitati committimus." — *Epist.*, xi. 64.

Church, raised, nevertheless, a formidable barrier between the British clergy and his Roman missionaries.

Augustin at issue with the Celtic bishop.

It is evident that Augustin always showed himself capable of understanding and applying the precepts of his friend and master. No incident of his life, recorded in his history, indicates any opposition to, or departure from, the rules laid down for him by the prudence and charity of Gregory. He was faithful to these rules in his relations with the British bishops placed by the Pope under his jurisdiction, as well as in all other respects. A rapid survey of this conflict would even lead the reader to protest against the unjust and calumnious accusations of which it has been the object, and will prove that Augustin was exclusively guided by a natural desire to put an end to dissensions which impaired the unity of the efforts necessary for the conversion of the Saxons.

Wherein, then, consisted those differences between Rome and the Celtic Christianity of Wales, of Ireland, and of Caledonia, which occupy so prominent a place in the religious history of the sixth and seventh centuries, and which the irritable and haughty zeal of St. Columbanus carried over into France, and with which he tried the patience of St. Gregory ;[84] while Augustin, on his side, found in them the chief stumbling-block to his mission in Great Britain? It cannot be too often repeated, that they affected none of the essential doctrines of Christianity, no article of faith defined by the Church either before or since that period, no question of morals, and, above all, that they did not offer any opposition to the supremacy of the Holy See, as it was then exercised or accepted by the rest of the Christian world.

Modern research has finally dispersed all the imaginary chimeras of certain English and German writers who attributed these differences to a pretended influence of Eastern Christianity on the British Churches, of which no authentic trace exists ; or more readily still, to a traditional repugnance on the part of the Celtic population to the yoke of Rome — a repugnance belied by the history of the past, as well as by the living testimony of the races, the most tenacious and most illustrious members of which, the Irish and the Armoricans, have purchased, at the cost of the most generous and cruel sacrifices, the right of placing themselves in the foremost rank of the faithful children of the Church of Rome.[85]

[84] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 555.

[85] The most weighty writers of Protestant Germany in our day, such as

The principal difference turned on the question of the date of the festival of Easter. This nice question — the bugbear of all who embark on the study of the primitive annals of the Church — has already emerged in the course of our history, and will often again recur.[86]

The dissension regarding Easter.

From the earliest Christian ages prolonged discussions were raised regarding the day on which the greatest festival of the Church should be celebrated. The Council of Nice fixed the date of the Pascal solemnities for the Sunday after the full moon of the vernal equinox, and that date, sanctioned by the Roman Church, had been received along with the Christian faith by all the Churches of Britain, and had been carried by St. Patrick to Ireland, and by St. Columba to Caledonia. But the Church of Alexandria, having discovered an astronomical error, originating in the employment of the ancient Jewish computation by the Christians, had introduced a more exact calculation, which was adopted by all the Eastern Churches; and the result was, that from the pontificate of St. Leo the Great (440–61) a difference of an entire month had arisen between Easter-day at Rome and Easter-day at Alexandria. Towards the middle of the sixth century, the difference ceased to exist; Rome adopted the calculation of Denys le Petit, which demonstrated clearly the error of the day fixed by the Council of Nice, and from this date uniformity was re-established in the Church. But the Saxon invasion had interrupted the ordinary intercourse between Rome and the British Churches; they retained the ancient Roman usage, and it was precisely their attachment to that usage which was their argument against the more exact computation which Augustin and the Italian monks brought with them, but which the British rejected as suspicious novelties, to receive which would be an insult to the traditions of their fathers.[87] It was thus from their very fidelity to the early teachings of Rome that they resisted the new Roman missionaries.

Gieseler, have already abandoned this hypothesis, so long accepted by their co-religionists. It has been learnedly refuted by the illustrious Professor Döllinger in his *Manual of Ecclesiastical History*, and it may be said annihilated by the two Memoirs of M. Varin on the *Causes of the Dissension between the British and the Roman Church*, published by the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, 1858. A digest of the conclusions of these two Memoirs will be found in Appendix II.

[86] See *ante*, vol. i. book vii.

[87] Walter, *Alte Wales*, p. 225. Dollinger, *op. cit.*, i. 2d part, 216.

This cause of dissension, by far the most important, was of a very recent date, and all the disputes that can be made out on other points (except that regarding the form of the tonsure) were equally new, without being at all more essential. If it had been otherwise — had there been the slightest difference touching doctrine or morals between the British and the Roman Church — Augustin would never have been guilty of the folly of soliciting the aid of the Celtic clergy in the conversion of the heathen Saxons. This would have been but to sow the seeds of confusion and discord in the new Church, which it was his business to organize by means of the energetic co-operation of the native Christians and the envoys of Rome.[88]

There is nothing more painful than to meet in history with endless and passionate contentions upon questions and causes which, after some time has passed, are interesting or even intelligible to no human creature. But it is not Christian antiquity alone that offers us such a spectacle: we find it in all ages. And to those who profess to be scandalized at the overweening importance that the most pious minds of their time have attached to equal trifles, it should be enough to recall the determined obstinacy which prompted great nations, such as the English and the Russians, to resist the reform of the Gregorian calendar — the one for nearly two centuries, the other amidst the complete uniformity of the entire civilized world.

It is no less true that, by that obstinate fidelity to a venerable, though false, computation, the British set themselves at variance on this question of Easter, not only with Rome and the whole West, but also with the East, which celebrated that festival, like the Jews, on the precise day of the week on which it fell, while the British, in common with the whole Western Church, always held the celebration on Sunday. But this Sunday was, or might be, another day than that kept as Easter-day at Rome.

Who could imagine that this pitiful and absurd difference should have kept the two Churches for two centuries on a footing of direct hostility? Since the British Celts received their ancient custom from Rome itself, why could they not follow Rome in her perfected reckoning as all the rest of the West did? Why should they have positively decided to hold festival while the Romans fasted; and to fast while at Rome they chanted the Hallelujah?

[88] Dollinger, p. 217. Rees, *Welsh Saints*, p. 288.

Was there not a more serious, a deeper cause for this dissension, of which the Pascal controversy was but the outward aspect? It is impossible to doubt it; and of all causes it was the most natural and excusable — the instinct of national preservation, exasperated by hatred of the triumphant enemy, and expressing itself in distrust of the stranger, who seemed to be an accomplice of that enemy.

Augustin knew well that he needed the aid of the Celtic Christians in order to carry on successfully the great work which the Papacy had intrusted to him. Trained in the conciliatory and moderate school of St. Gregory the Great, fresh from his recent instructions, he was very far from being exclusive in regard to local personages or customs; and in order to effect the conversion of the Saxons, he claimed in all good faith the co-operation of the numerous and powerful clergy who, for more than a century, had been the very soul of the resistance to the heathen, and who peopled those great cloisters of Wales, into which the sword of the invader had never penetrated.

But the British resisted him with a jealous and obstinate opposition. They would not join him in evangelizing their enemies; they had no wish to open to them the gates of heaven.[89]

First conference between Augustin and the British bishops.

Augustin, however, succeeded in obtaining the consent of the principal bishops and doctors of Wales to a conference with him. It was arranged that they should meet on the confines of Wessex, near the banks of the Severn, which separated the Saxons from the Britons. The interview, like that of Augustin with Ethelbert, after his landing in Kent, took place in the open air, and under an oak, which for a long time afterwards was known as Augustin's oak. He began, not by claiming the personal supremacy which the Pope had conceded to him, but by exhorting his hearers to live in Catholic peace with him, and to unite their efforts to his for the evangelization of the pagans — that is to say, the Saxons. But neither his entreaties, nor his exhortations, nor his reproaches, nor the eloquence of his attendant monks joined to his own, availed to bend the Britons, who persisted in appealing to their own traditions in opposition to the new rules. After a long and laborious disputation, Augustin at last said, "Let us pray God, who maketh brethren to dwell together

[89] Varin, Memoir cited.

in unity, to show us by a sign from heaven what traditions we ought to follow. Let a sick man be brought hither, and he whose prayers shall cure him shall be the one whose faith is to be followed." The British consented reluctantly. An Anglo-Saxon blind man was brought, whom the British bishops could not cure. Then Augustin fell on his knees, and implored God to enlighten the conscience of many of the faithful, by giving sight to this man. Immediately the blind man recovered his vision. The British were touched;[90] they acknowledged that Augustin's course was just and straightforward, but that they could not renounce their old customs without the consent of their people, and demanded a second assembly, in which their deputies should be more numerous.

The second conference was held soon after. Augustin there found himself in the presence of seven British bishops and of the most learned doctors of the great Monastery of Bangor, which contained more than 3000 monks, and which was, as we have seen, the centre of religious life in Wales. Before this new meeting, the Britons went to consult an anchorite, much famed among them for his wisdom and his sanctity, and asked him if they ought to give heed to Augustin, and abandon their traditions. "Yes," said the hermit, "if he is a man of God." "But how shall we know that?" "If he is meek and lowly of heart, as says the Gospel, it is probable that he carries the yoke of Jesus Christ, and that it is His yoke he offers you; but if he is hard and proud, he comes not from God, and you ought to give no heed to his discourse. In order to prove him, let him arrive the first at the place of council; and if he rises when you approach, you will know that he is a servant of Christ, and you will obey him; but if he rises not to do you honor, then despise him, as he will have despised you."[91]

The instructions of the anchorite were obeyed. Unfortunately, on arriving at the place of council they found Augustin already seated, *more Romano*, says an historian, and he did not rise to receive them.[92] This was enough to set them

[90] "Ut pace catholica secum habita, communem evangelizandi gentibus pro domino laborem susciperent. . . . Laboriosi atque longi certaminis finem fecit. . . . Quidam de genere Anglorum, oculorum usu privatus. . . . Confitentur intellexisse se veram esse viam justitiæ quam prædicaret Augustinus." — Bede, ii. 2.

[91] "Sin autem vos spreverit, nec coram vobis adsurgere voluerit, cum sitis plures, et ipse spernatur a vobis." — Bede, ii. 2.

[92] "Cum ergo convenisset, et Augustinus *Romano more* in sella residens iis non assurrexisset." — Henr. Huntingdon, iii. 186, ed. Savile.

against him. "If this man," said they, "deigns not to rise at our arrival now, how will he slight us when we shall have acknowledged his authority!" From that hour they became intractable, and studied to thwart him at every point. Neither then nor at the first conference did the archbishop make any effort to induce them to acknowledge his personal authority. Let it be added, to the honor of this headstrong race, and rebellious but earnest and generous clergy, that Augustin did not reproach them with any of those infringements of the purity of the priestly life which some authors have imputed to them.[93] With moderation, in scrupulous conformity to the instructions of the Pope, he reduced all his claims to three main points. "You have," said he, "many practices which are contrary to our usage, which is that of the universal Church; we will admit them all without difficulty, if only you will believe me on three points: to celebrate Easter at the right time; to complete the sacrament of baptism[94] according to the usage of the holy Roman Church; and to preach the word of God along with us to the English nation." To this threefold demand the Celtic bishops and monks offered a threefold refusal, and added that they would never acknowledge him as archbishop.[95] In thus refusing to recognize the personal supremacy of Augustin, they in nowise rejected that of the Holy See. What they dreaded was not a Pope at a distance from them, impartial and universally respected at Rome, but a kind of new pope at Canterbury, within the territory and under the influence of their hereditary foes, the Saxons.[96] And, above all else, they objected to

[93] "Errorem Bretonum . . . quo alia plura ecclesiasticæ castitati et paci contraria gerunt." — Bede, v. 18. Compare Gildas, *De Excidio*, p. 23. Döllinger believes that he refers here to the *subintroductæ*, so often denounced by the councils. He notices elsewhere that the British priests alone have been the object of these accusations, which have never been brought against the other branches of the Celtic Church.

[94] He referred probably to Confirmation.

[95] "Quia in multis quidem nostræ consuetudini, immo universalis Ecclesiæ contrariæ geritis; et tamen si in tribus his mihi obtemperare vultis; ut Pascha suo tempore celebretis, ut ministerium baptizandi, quo Deo renascimur, juxta morem sanctæ Romanæ et apostolicæ Ecclesiæ compleatis, ut genti Anglorum una nobiscum verbum Domini prædicetis, cætera quæ agitis, quamvis moribus nostris contraria, æquanimiter cuncta tolerabimus."— Bede, v. 18.

[96] Hook, the most recent English historian of the archbishops of Canterbury, acknowledges this fact with an impartiality which is not always habitual to him. We shall be excused discussing the pretended anti-papal reply of the orator of Bangor, an English invention, published in the collections of Spelman and Wilkins, and complacently repeated by M. Augustin Thierry. Lingard, Döllinger, *op. cit.*, p. 218, and Professor Walter, have demonstrated

be told of the duty of laboring for the conversion of the odious Saxons, who had slaughtered their forefathers and usurped their lands. "No," said the abbot of Bangor, "we will not preach the faith to this cruel race of strangers who have treacherously driven our ancestors from their country, and robbed their posterity of their heritage."[97]

Threatening prophecy of Augustin against the monks of Bangor.

It is easy to see which of the three conditions Augustin had most at heart by the threatening prediction with which he met the refusal of the British monks. "Since you will not have peace with brethren, you shall have war with enemies: since you will not show to the English the way of life, you shall receive from their hands the punishment of death."

613?

This prophecy was only too cruelly fulfilled some years later. The king of the northern English, Ethelfrid, still a pagan, invaded the district of Wales in which stood the great Monastery of Bangor. At the moment when the battle began between his numerous army and that of the Welsh, he saw at a distance, in an elevated position, a body of men, unarmed and on their knees. "Who are these?" he asked. He was told they were the monks of the great Monastery of Bangor, who, after fasting for three days, had come to pray for their brethren during the battle. "If they pray to their God for my enemies," said the king, "they are fighting against us, unarmed though they be." And he directed the first onslaught to be made against them. The Welsh prince, who should have defended them, fled shamefully, and 1200 monks were massacred on the field of battle, martyrs of Christian faith and of Celtic patriotism.[98] Thus ended, say the annals of Ireland, the day of the slaughter of the saints.[99]

its falsity, already exposed by Turberville in his *Manuale Controversiarum;* Rees, Stephenson, Hussey, and all the modern English writers of any weight, have agreed to renounce it. Let us recall here the learned and deeply-to-be-lamented Abbé Gorini's excellent refutation of the inexcusable errors committed by M. Augustin Thierry in his narrative of the mission of St. Augustin.

[97] Welsh chronicle, entitled *Brut Tysilio*, and Galfrid. Monmoutho, xi. 2, ap. Walter. *op. cit.*, pp. 225, 227.

[98] "Cum videret sacerdotes . . . seorsum in loco tutiore consistere, sciscitabatur quid essent hi, quidve acturi illo convenissent. . . . Ergo si adversum nos at Deum suum clamant, profecto et ipsi quamvis arma non ferant contra nos pugnant. Itaque in hos primum arma verti jubet, et sic cæteras nefandæ militiæ copias . . . delevit . . . ut etiam temporalis interitus ultione sentirent perfidi, quod oblata sibi perpetuæ salutis consilia spreverant." — Bede, v. 18.

[99] *Annales Tighernach*, ad. ann. 606.

An old calumny, revived in our day, makes Augustin answerable for this invasion, and accuses him of having pointed out the monastery of Bangor to the Northumbrian heathens.[100] But the Venerable Bede expressly states that he had been for a long time a saint in heaven when this invasion took place. It is enough that Bede himself, much more Saxon than Christian whenever he treats of the British, applauds this massacre more than a century afterwards, and sees in it Heaven's just vengeance on what he calls the infamous army of the disloyal Welsh — that is to say, on the heroic Christians who, in defence of their hearths and altars, fell beneath the sword of the pagan Anglo-Saxons, under the orders of a chief who, according to the testimony of Bede himself, slew more of the native population than any of his predecessors.[101]

After such an explosion of his own national antipathies, he seems to be singularly little entitled to reproach the Celts of Wales with the steadfastness of their resentment, as he does in stating that even in his time they made no account of the religion of the Anglo-Saxons, and would hold no more communion with them than with pagans.[102]

It is possible, as an ingenious critic has said, that Augustin and his companions did not treat with sufficient tact the national and insular pride of the British, heightened by a long warlike resistance, by the traditions of the monks, and the patriotic songs of the bards.[103] But nothing, I repeat, indicates the slightest departure on his part from the counsel and example of the glorious pontiff whose disciple and emulator he was. Condemned by the obstinacy of the British to deprive himself of their assistance, he none the less continued his "hunt of men," as his biographer calls it, by evangelizing the Saxons, who at least did not wear him out,

[100] This false imputation can be traced back to Geoffrey of Monmouth, bishop of St. Asaph in the twelfth century, and mouthpiece of the national rancors of Wales. Certain obscure writers, unworthy descendants of the Anglo-Saxons, such as Goodwin and Hammond, have adopted it out of hatred of the Romish Church, and not knowing how to reconcile it with Bede's positive assertion of the prior death of Augustin, have pretended that this passage of the Venerable historian had been interpolated. But all the modern editors of Bede have been obliged to acknowledge that the contested passage existed in all the MSS. of that author *without exception*. Compare Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 74; Varin, *Premier Mémoire*, pp. 25–29; Gorini, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 77.

[101] Bede, i. 34.

[102] Bede, ii. 20. See the text already cited, p. 687.

[103] Ozanam, p. 153.

like the Welsh, with their wordiness and their endless discussions.[104] And yet, even among the former he sometimes encountered an opposition which expressed itself in insult and derision, especially when he passed beyond the bounds of Ethelbert's kingdom. On one occasion, while traversing that region of the country of the West Saxons which is now called Dorsetshire, he and his companions found themselves in the midst of a seafaring population, who heaped on them affronts and outrages. These heathen savages not only refused to hear them, but even drove them away with acts of violence, and in hunting them from their territory, with a rude derision truly Teutonic, fastened to the black robes of the poor Italian monks, as a mark of contempt, the tails of the fish which formed their livelihood.[105] Augustin was not a man to be discouraged by such trifles. Besides, he found in other places crowds more attentive and more impressible. And thus he persevered for seven entire years, until his death, in his apostolic journeys — travelling after, as well as before, his archiepiscopal consecration, like a true missionary, always on foot, without carriage or baggage, and adding to his unwearied preaching good works and miracles — here making unknown springs gush from the ground, there healing by his touch the sick believed to be incurable or dying.[106]

Foundations of Ethelbert. Bishoprics of London and Rochester.

Meanwhile Ethelbert did not fail in solicitude for and generosity to the Church of which he had become the ardent disciple. Not content with the gifts which he had bestowed on the two great monasteries of Canterbury — on that which surrounded the metropolitan church, and on the Abbey of St. Peter and

[104] "Vix crediderim Augustinum a quoquam paganorum majori fatigatum verborum ambage. . . . In occidentalem ab Aquiloni plagam divertit, non tam viatoris quam venatoris aut aucupis morem gerens." — GOTSELINUS, *Hist. Maior*, c. 32, 41.

[105] "Plebs impia . . . tota ludibriorum et opprobriorum in sanctos debacchata . . . nec manu pepercisse creditur. . . . Fama est illos effulminandos provenientes marinorum piscium caudas sanctis appendisse." — GOTSELINUS, c. 41.

[106] "Tam post præsulatum quam ante, semper pede, absque vehiculo, patiens ambulando, liber et expeditus prædicationi evangelicæ." — ELMHAM, *Hist. Monaster. S. Augustini*, p. 106. Compare GOTSELINUS, c. 44 and 49. This historian reproduces the story of an old man whose grandfather had, while still young, been a scoffer at the wonderful stranger whom the crowd followed and surrounded as though he were an angel from heaven, because he went about healing all their infirmities. "Cum vero audissem illum omnium debilium ac moribundorum curare corpora, ampliori incredulus cachinnabam vesania." He ended, nevertheless, in being baptized by the hand of Augustin himself.

St. Paul without the walls — he seconded with all his might the introduction of Christianity into a kingdom adjacent to his own and placed under his suzerainty — that of the Saxons of the East, or of Essex, the king of which was the son of his sister, and which was only separated from Kent by the Thames. Augustin having sent thither as bishop the monk Mellitus, one of the new missionaries sent to him by Gregory, Ethelbert built at London, the chief city of the West Saxons, a church, dedicated to St. Paul, intended for a cathedral, which it still is. In his own kingdom of Kent he authorized the erection of a second bishopric, situated at Rochester, a Roman city, twenty miles west of Canterbury; Augustin placed there as bishop another of the new missionaries, Justus by name; and the king caused a cathedral to be built there, which he named after St. Andrew, in memory of the Roman monastery whence Pope Gregory had drawn all the apostles of the Anglo-Saxon race.[107]

All these foundations, destined to last to our own times in spite of so many strange and unhappy changes, invest him with an imperishable claim on the gratitude of Christian posterity; and long afterwards, when the Norman nobility had in their turn seized upon the supreme power and changed the aspect of the Church of England, King Ethelbert became apparent to her as the first who had provided with seignorial strongholds, in the shape of bishops' seats and monasteries, the kingdom which he desired to hold in fee for the Lord God.[108]

Laws of Ethelbert guaranteeing the possessions and peace of the Church.

He did yet more for the Church of his country by securing for her property and her liberties what we may call, in modern rather than just terms, a legal and parliamentary sanction. In one of those periodical assemblies of the sages and chief men of the Saxon people, which bore the name of *Witenagemot*, and which were the origin of the modern Parliament, he caused certain laws — the text of which is still preserved — to be committed to writing and published in the Anglo-Saxon tongue. They confirmed at once the old rights of the people, and the new rights conceded to the new Church. The first of the ninety articles of that legislative act enacts that those who should rob the goods of the Church, of the bishops,

[107] Bede, ii. 3.

[108] "Tum episcopia et monasteria tanquam dominica castella, quibus Dominicum regnum teneatur, liberaliter ac regaliter passim machinatur." — Gotselinus, *Hist. Maior*, c. 23.

or other orders of the clergy, shall make restitution eleven or twelve times beyond the value of the robbery.[109] The same article sanctioned implicitly what the English have since named the *right of sanctuary* — that is, the right of asylum and protection recognized as belonging to the precincts of Churches and monasteries — by visiting the violation of that peace of the Church with a penalty the double of that incurred by violation of the public peace. The whole nation thus sanctioned and ratified the work of its king by placing under the safeguard of penal laws the property and safety of the ministers of the religion which it had adopted.[110]

These laws, long known by the name of *Dooms* or *Judgments of Ethelbert*, are the first written laws known to us, not only of the English, but perhaps of any of the Germanic races. The best informed critics attribute to the influence of the Roman monks on the Anglo-Saxon king, this commencement of the national, or rather penal code.[111] For its enactments were chiefly penal, and we cannot but admire the wisdom of those missionaries who, trained in the traditions of Roman jurisprudence, nevertheless established and sanctioned the principle of pecuniary compensation universally adopted by the Germanic races. In these laws of Ethelbert a classification of social position is clearly apparent from the minutely exact enumeration of crimes committed against the life or safety of men, the honor of women, religion, and public peace. Every trespass is punished by a penalty proportionate — first, to the gravity of the offence, and next, to the rank of the victim. In case of murder, the compensation is due not only to the family of the deceased, but also to the community of which he was a member, and to the king who was his sovereign. This system, applied for the first time to the defence of the Christian Church by the Saxons

[109] "Ut ecclesiæ peculium duodecies, episcopi undecies emendaretur." — According to the instructions given by Gregory to Augustin, this surplus value of the restitution did not profit the Church, which was bound to be content with the simple restoration of what had been taken.

[110] "Inter cætera bona quæ genti suæ conferendo conferebat, etiam decreta illi judiciorum juxta exempla Romanorum, cum concilio sapientium constituit. . . . Volens scilicet tuitionem eis quos et quorum doctrinam susceperat, præstare." — Bede, ii. 5. Compare Kemble, *Saxons in England*, ii. 205; Hook, *op. cit.*, p. 59; Wilkins, *Concilia*, p. 25; Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, 1840, c. 1. This last publication, executed by order of the English Government, gives the Saxon text of the laws of Ethelbert, with a very intelligent commentary.

[111] Lappenberg, vol. i. p. 142; Lingard, *Hist. of England*, c. 11; Lord Campbell, *Lives of the Chancellors*, art. Angemundus; especially Phillips, *Geschichte des Angelsachsischen Rechts*, p. 61.

of Kent, and for the first time reduced to a written form under the guidance of the Roman monks, will be found in all the subsequent legislation of the Saxon kingdoms, which the bishops and monks, successors of Augustin, continued to guide with a strong yet gentle hand into the ways of Christian civilization.

Great men, commissioned by God to begin works which are to be truly great and enduring, seldom live to old age; and when one of them disappears, it often happens that he carries with him on his way to a better world those who have been on earth his companions, servants, and friends. St. Gregory the Great, whose pontificate has left an ineffaceable impression upon the memory of Christendom, and a peerless example in the annals of the Church, reigned only fifteen years. He died in the early month of the year 605, and two months after Augustin followed his father and friend to the tomb.[112] The Roman missionary was interred, after the Roman custom, by the side of the public way, the great Roman road which led from Canterbury to the sea, and in the unfinished church of the famous monastery which was about to assume and to preserve his name.

Death of Gregory and of Augustin.
605.
12th March.
12th May.

The name of Gregory will remain always identified with that conversion of England which was the labor of love of his whole life, and the greatest glory of his pontificate. His large and tender heart had been the first to conceive the thought of that conquest. His patient and conciliating genius, at once ardent and gentle, prudent and resolute, revealed to him the conditions of success. It is to him that the English race — at this day the most numerous and powerful of all Christian races — owes the revelation of the light of the Gospel.

He was the true apostle, the conqueror of England for God, and, through England, of immense countries which she has subjected to her laws, to her language, and to her religion. It is, then, with good reason that the first English historian claims for him this title. "Called," says Bede, "to a supreme pontificate over all the nations already converted to the faith, to our nation which was in bondage to idols, and out of which he has formed a Christian Church, he has been

[112] There has been much dispute about the date of the death of Augustin, which Mabillon had fixed in 607. But the majority of English historians are now agreed upon the date 605. Wharton would even place it as early as 604. — *Anglia Sacra*, vol. i. p. 91.

something more. We may well say of Gregory what Paul said of himself to the Corinthians — that if he has not been the apostle of others, he has been *our* apostle. Yes, we are the seal of his apostleship in the Lord — we, the people whom he rescued from the fangs of the old enemy, to make us partakers of the eternal freedom." [113]

The nature of the means that Gregory employed to accomplish his work, and the moral perfection of the arrangements which he brought to bear on it, are even more to be admired than the work itself; — zeal, devotion, wisdom, moderation, love of souls, and respect for their freedom, pity, generosity, vigilance, indomitable perseverance, divine gentleness, intelligent patience — nothing was awanting in him. We leave the history of his pontificate, and especially of his intercourse with England, with no other regret than that inseparable from witnessing the end of so noble a life; and in losing sight of him, are left uncertain which should be the most admired — his good sense or his good heart, his genius or his virtue.

The figure of St. Augustin of Canterbury naturally pales beside that of St. Gregory the Great; his renown is, as it were, absorbed into the brilliant centre of the Pontiff's glory. And recent English and German historians [114] have taken delight in bringing out the inferiority of the man whom Gregory chose for his vicegerent and his friend. They have vied with each other in decrying his character and services — accusing him by turns of hauteur and of feebleness, of irresolution and of obstinacy, of softness and of vanity, — trying, especially, to heighten and magnify the indications of hesitation and of self-seeking which they discover in his life. Let it be permitted to these strange precisians to reproach him with having stopped short of the ideal of which they pretend to dream, and which no hero of theirs has ever approached. To our judgment, the few shadows which fall on the noble career of this great saint are left there to touch the hearts and console the spirits of those who are, like him, infirm, and charged sometimes with a mission which, like him, they judge to be beyond their strength.

[113] "Quia etsi aliis non est apostolus, sed tamen nobis est; nam signaculum apostolatus ejus nos sumus in Domino. . . . Quod nostram gentem per prædicatores quos huc direxit, de dentibus antiqui hostis eripiens æterl.æ libertatis fecit esse participem." — Bede, ii. 1.

[114] Stanley, Hook, Lappenberg.

Among the workers of great works who have changed the history of the world and decided the fate of nations one loves to meet with those infirmities, which give encouragement to the common average of men.

Let us, then, preserve intact our admiration and our gratitude for the first missionary — the first bishop and abbot of the English people. Let us give our meed of applause to that council which, a century and a half after his death, decreed that his name should be always invoked in the Litanies after that of Gregory, "because it is he who, sent by our father Gregory, first carried to the English nation the sacrament of baptism and the knowledge of the heavenly country." [115]

CHAPTER III.

FIRST SUCCESSORS OF ST. AUGUSTIN — PAGAN REACTION.

Special characteristics of the conversion of England. — All the details of it are known: it has neither martyrs nor persecutions; it has been the exclusive work of Benedictine or Celtic monks. — All the Roman missionaries were monks; their monasteries served for cathedrals and parish churches. — Laurence, first successor of Augustin. — Mellitus at the council of Rome at 610; Pope's letter to Ethelbert; monks of Saxon origin. — Efforts of Laurence to reconcile the British; his letter to the Irish bishops. — Conversion of the kings of East Anglia and Essex. — Foundation of Westminster; legend of the fisher; King Sebert the first to be buried there; monastic burials; Nelson and Wellington. — Canterbury and Westminster, the metropolis and national necropolis of the English, due to the monks. — Death of Bertha and of Ethelbert; the abbot Peter drowned. — Eadbald, the new king of Kent, remains a pagan; his subjects, as also the Saxons of the East, return to paganism. — Flight of the bishops of London and Rochester; Archbishop Laurence held back by St. Peter. — Conversion of Eadbald. — Apostasy of the king of East Anglia; he admits Christ among the Scandinavian gods. — Mellitus and Justus, the second and third successors of Augustin.

Special characteristics of the conversion of England.

THE preaching of the Gospel in England is marked by several characteristics altogether peculiar to itself, and distinguishing it from those

[115] "Qui genti Anglorum a præfato Papa et patre nostro missus . . . scientiam fidei, baptismi sacramentum et cœlestis patriæ notitiam primus attulit." — *Concilium Cloveshoviense*, anno 747.

revolutions which introduced Christianity into the western nations previously converted to the faith.

In Italy, Gaul, and Spain, the propagation of the Gospel and the extinction of paganism are surrounded with such obscurity that it is impossible to be sure of the date at which the first evangelists of most of the dioceses lived.

Its details known.

In England, on the other hand, nothing is vague or uncertain. Year by year, and day by day, we witness the various phases of the grand event. We take part, as it were, in the very work — the conversion of a great country — which it is so rarely possible to study in detail. We can follow it in all its changes of fortune with the same certainty and precision as if it were an incident in our contemporary missions.

Neither martyrs nor persecutors.

Moreover, in the great lands and illustrious churches which have just been named, the baptism of blood everywhere accompanied or preceded the conversion of the people. Like the apostles at Rome and in the East, the missionaries of the Gospel in the West had, for the most part, to water with their blood the first furrows that they were honored to draw in the field of the divine Husbandman. Even after the great imperial persecutions had come to an end, martyrdom often crowned the apostolate of the first bishops or their auxiliaries.

In England there was nothing at all like this: from the first day of St. Augustin's preaching, and during the whole existence of the Anglo-Saxon Church, there was neither martyr nor persecutor there. When brought within the circle of the pure and radiant light of Christianity, and even before they acknowledged and worshipped it, these fierce Saxons, pitiless as they were to their enemies, showed themselves very much more humanely disposed and accessible to the truth than the enlightened and civilized citizens of Imperial Rome. Not one drop of blood was shed for the sake of religion, or under any religious pretext; and this wonder occurred at a time when blood flowed in torrents for the most frivolous motives, and in that island where afterwards so many piles were to be lighted, and so many scaffolds raised, to immolate the English who should remain true to the faith of Gregory and Augustin.

The conversion the exclusive work of the monks.

A third distinctive feature of the conversion of England is that it was exclusively the work of monks; first, of Benedictine monks sent from Rome — and afterwards, as we shall see, of Celtic monks,

who seemed for a moment about to eclipse or supplant the Italian monks, but who soon suffered themselves to be absorbed by the influence of the Benedictines, and whose spiritual posterity is inseparably connected with that of the Roman missionaries in the common observance of the rule of the great legislator of the monks of the West.

The monastic profession of these first missionaries has been the subject of frequent and long dispute. While it has been admitted that many were of the order to which he himself belonged, it has been denied that all the monks sent by St. Gregory the Great were Benedictines. But the unerring and unrivalled learning of Mabillon has settled the question by irrefutable arguments.[116] It is possible that some clerks or secular priests were to be found among the assistants of the first Archbishop of Canterbury; but it is distinctly proved, by the authority of Bede and of all the earliest records, that Augustin himself and his successors, as well as all the religious of his metropolitan church and the great abbey which bore his name, followed the rule of St. Benedict, like the great Pope whose mission they carried out. Gregory, as has been seen, was desirous of taking advantage of the new ecclesiastical organization of England to introduce

[116] In the preface of the first century of the *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*, paragraph 8, Mabillon has completely proved against Baronius and Marsham, one of the editors of the *Monasticon Anglicanum*, that Gregory, Augustin, and their disciples belonged to the order of St. Benedict. The brethren of Saint-Maur, in the life of Gregory placed at the beginning of their edition of his works, have completed the proof (book iii. c. 5, 6, 7). These brief but weighty pages say more on the subject than the folio entitled *Apostolatus Benedictinorum in Anglia, sive Disceptatio Historica de Antiquitate Ordinis Congregationisque Monachorum Nigrorum in Regno Angliæ*, opera R. P. Clementis Reyneri, Duaci, 1626. This ill-arranged and tedious compilation is nevertheless important for the later history of England, on account of the numerous and curious articles which it contains. One of the most curious is the note asked and obtained by the author from the four most celebrated and learned English Protestants of his time, Cotton, Spelman, Camden, and Selden, who unanimously declare that all their researches have led them to the conclusion that St. Augustin, his companions, and his successors, were Benedictines. The English text of this is to be found in Stevens, *Continuation of Dugdale*, vol. i. p. 171. A modern Anglican, Soames, has recently asserted that the Benedictines did not arrive till the tenth century with St. Dunstan; but he has been refuted by the two most distinguished of modern English archæologists, the Protestant Kemble and the Catholic Lingard. The latter, however, is in error in supposing (*History and Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 152) that Augustin placed in the Cathedral of Canterbury clerks and not monks. He has mistaken the early synonymy of the words *clerici* and *monachi*, in modern times used to express two entirely distinct ideas, but which were employed indifferently from the days of Gregory of Tours to those of the Venerable Bede, and even later.

there that close alliance of the monastic and ecclesiastical life which, to his mind, realized the ideal of the apostolic church. For more than a century that alliance was universal and absolute. Wherever the pagan temples were transformed into churches — wherever the old churches of the time of the Romans and Britons rose from their ruins — there monastic life prevailed among the missionaries who served the cures. The converted country was thus, little by little, overspread by monasteries; the small ones for a long time held the place of rural parish churches; the large served for cathedrals, chapter-houses, and residences for the bishops, who were all produced by the monastic orders.

Laurence, first successor of Augustin.

605-619.

The first thirty-eight archbishops of Canterbury were all monks; and the first four successors of St. Augustin were taken from among the monks of the Monastery of St. Andrew at Rome, whom Pope Gregory had appointed to be his fellow-workmen During his life, Augustin had chosen as his successor in the primacy his companion Laurence, and had procured his consecration beforehand, thus meaning, with fatherly anxiety, to make the best provision for the frail fortunes of the new-born Church of the English.[117] The new archbishop did honor to the choice which had honored him. He devoted himself nobly to the consolidation of the Church which he had seen founded; he conciliated all hearts, and increased the number of the faithful by the unwearied activity of his preaching no less than by the saintly example of his life.

606-616.

Laurence lived for ten years in an intimate union with the good king Ethelbert, and acted as the medium of communication between that prince and the Holy See. The third successor of Gregory, Boniface IV. — he who consecrated the Roman Pantheon to Christian worship in memory of all the martyrs — exhibited towards the king and the missionary monks of the kingdom of Kent a good-will and confidence worthy of his illustrious predecessor.

[117] "Ne se defuncto adhuc status ecclesiæ tam rudis, vel ad horam pastore destitutus, vacillare inciperet." — Bede, ii. 4. The last historian of the archbishops of Canterbury, Dr. Hook, maintains that Laurence was not a monk, taking as his ground the passage in which Bede describes him as priest to distinguish him from his companion Peter the monk: "Misit continuo Romam Laurentium presbyterum et Petrum monachum." — i. 27. He forgets that this same Peter is himself described as priest some pages farther on: "Primus ejusdem monasterii abbas Petrus presbyter fuit." — i. 33. The title of priest was not at all incompatible with the monastic profession. That point was settled at the Council of Rome in 610 — only then, as now, all monks were not in priest's orders.

Mellitus, the new bishop of the East Saxons, was sent by Laurence to Rome to consult the Pope upon different matters affecting the interests of the Church of England. He was one of the members of the Council of Rome, in which were promulgated the canons which confirmed the rule of St. Benedict, and accorded to the monks the right of administering the sacraments and of being admitted to all the grades of the priesthood.[118] Mellitus brought back to England the decrees of this council, which he had himself signed along with the other bishops; he brought likewise very gracious letters from the Pope to the archbishop and to the king. "Glorious king," Boniface wrote to Ethelbert, "we accord to you with right good will that which you have demanded of the Apostolic See through our co-bishop Mellitus: to wit, that in the monastery which your holy teacher Augustin, the disciple of Gregory, of blessed memory, consecrated under the name of the Holy Saviour, in your city of Canterbury, and over which our very dear brother Laurence now presides, you should establish a dwelling for monks, living together in complete regularity; and we decree, by our apostolic authority, that the monks who have preached the faith to you may take this new monastic community into association with themselves, and teach its members to live a holy life." [119] 27th Feb., 610.

Through the obscurity of this language it seems natural to conclude that the introduction of new monks, probably of Saxon origin, into the Italian community founded by Augustin, is here indicated. A century passed, however, ere an abbot born in England could be chosen to preside over it.

Efforts of Laurence to bring about the conversion of the Britons.

Like Augustin, Archbishop Laurence was not content to labor for the salvation of the Saxons with his monkish brethren only: his pastoral anxiety urged him to search for the means of bringing the Christians of the ancient British race into unity

[118] "Cum idem Papa cogeret synodem episcoporum Italiæ, de vita monachorum et quiete ordinaturus." — Bede, *loc. cit.*

[119] "Fili gloriose, quod ab Apostolica sede per coepiscopum nostrum Mellitum postulatis, libenti animo concedimus; id est, ut vestra benignitas in monasterio in Dorobernensi civitate constituto, quod sanctus doctor vester Augustinus, beatæ memoriæ Gregorii discipulus, sancti Salvatoris nomini consecravit, cui ad præsens præesse dignoscitur dilectissimus frater noster Laurentius, licenter per omnia monachorum regulariter viventium habitationem statuat, apostolica auctoritate decernentes ut ipsi vestri prædicatores monachi monachorum gregem sibi associent et eorum vitam sanctitatum (*sic*) moribus exornent." — Guillelmus Malmesbur., *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum*, lib. i. p. 118, ed. Savile.

with Rome, so that he and they might work together for the conversion of the pagans. His experience of the conditions under which the Christian religion might be successfully extended made him bitterly deplore the hostile attitude of the Celtic monks, and the polemical rancor which broke out in them whenever they sought or consented to discuss the matters in dispute. It was at the same moment that the illustrious Columbanus impaired the effect of the admirable example which he set to France, Burgundy, and Switzerland, by his extraordinary eccentricities. The rumor of them had reached even Laurence, who could not forbear referring to it in an epistle which he addressed to the bishops and abbots of all Scotia — that is to say, of Ireland — the chief centre of the Celtic Church. Having failed, like Augustin, in a direct advance which, with his two suffragans, he had made to the clergy of the Welsh Britons, he sought to ascend to the source of the evil by writing to their brethren in the neighboring island to expostulate with them on their universal intolerance. His letter begins thus: —

"To our very dear brethren, the lords, bishops, and abbots of Ireland, — we, Laurence, Mellitus, and Justus, servants of the servants of God, greeting. The Holy See having directed us, as is its wont, to these western regions, there to preach the faith to the heathen, we have entered this island of Britain, not knowing what we did. Believing that they all followed the rules of the universal Church, we held in great veneration the piety of the Britons and the Scots. When we came to know the Britons, we thought the Scots were better than they. But now, when the bishop Dagan has come to us from Ireland, and when the abbot Columbanus has betaken himself to Gaul, we know that the Scots differ in nothing from the Britons; for the bishop Dagan has not only refused to partake of our hospitality — he has not even deigned to eat in the place which serves as our dwelling."[120] Dagan was a monk of the great Irish Monastery of Bangor: he had come to confer with the mission at Canterbury, and he had undoubtedly been offended by the firm determination of the Roman prelates to maintain the conditions of liturgical unity. No trace has survived of any overtures towards reconciliation on his part, or on that of any other representative of the Celtic Churches.

The Roman monks were for some time more suc-

[120] BEDE, *loc. cit.*

cessful among the Saxon settlements — neighbors or vassals of the monarchy of Ethelbert. The most eastern district of the island — that which, lying between the Thames and the sandy outlets of the Ouse, forms a sort of circular projection looking towards Scandinavia — was occupied, towards the north, by the tribe of East Angles, or English of the East. Their king, Redwald, who had paid a visit to the king of Kent, received baptism like him; and his conversion awakened hopes of the conversion of his people — a population much more numerous than that of the country already won for Christ, occupying as it did the large modern countries of Norfolk and Suffolk, with a part of the shires of Cambridge, Huntingdon, Bedford, and Hertford. Between East Anglia and Kent lay the kingdom of Essex, or of the Saxons of the East, already converted during Augustin's life, thanks to its king Sebert, the nephew of the Bretwalda Ethelbert. This kingdom was particularly important on account of its capital, the ancient Roman colony of LONDON, where Mellitus had been appointed bishop by Augustin.

Conversion of the kings of East Anglia and of Essex.

He had founded there, as we have seen, on the ruins of an ancient temple of Diana, a monastic cathedral dedicated to St. Paul. Soon after, to the west of the episcopal city, and on the site of a temple of Apollo, which had supplanted, after the Diocletian persecution, a church occupied by the first British Christians,[121] the new bishop of London built, with the concurrence of Sebert the king, another church and a monastery dedicated to St. Peter. Thus on the banks of the Thames, as on those of the Tiber, and in expressive and touching remembrance of Rome, the two princes of the apostles found in these two sanctuaries, separate yet near, a new consecration of their glorious brotherhood in the apostolate and martyrdom.

Foundation of Westminster. 610.

This modest monastic colony established itself on a frightful and almost inaccessible site,[122] in the middle of a deep marsh, on an islet formed by an arm of the Thames, and so covered with briers and thorns that it was called Thorney Island. From its position to the west of London it took a new name, destined to rank among the most famous in the world — that of WESTMINSTER, or Monastery of the West.

As far as our history can extend, it will always find the

[121] DUGDALE, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, vol. i. p. 55.

[122] "In loco terribili." — Charter quoted by RIDGWAY, *The Gem of Thorney Island*, p. 4.

national sanctuary of England encircled with growing splendor and celebrity. But at present our business is only to record the legend which brightens its humble cradle — a legend which we have already met with among the British at Glastonbury, and which we shall find among other nations at the beginning of other great monastic foundations — in France at that of St. Denis, in Switzerland at Einsiedlen — and which has exercised on the imagination of the English people an influence more durable and powerful than is generally produced by the best authenticated facts. Up to the sixteenth century it was still told from generation to generation that in the night preceding the day fixed for the consecration of the new church, and while Bishop Mellitus, within his tent, was preparing for the ceremony of the morrow, St. Peter, the great fisher of men, appeared under the form of an unknown traveller to a poor fisherman whose boat was moored on the bank of the Thames opposite the Isle of Thorns. The water was rough, and the river in flood. The stranger persuaded the fisherman to row him across to the opposite bank, and when he landed he made his way towards the new church. As he crossed its threshold, the fisherman with amazement saw the interior of the edifice lighted up. From floor to roof, within and without, a chorus of angelic voices filled the air with a music such as he had never heard, and with the sweetest odors. After a long interval the music ceased, and all disappeared except the stranger, who, returning, charged the fisherman to go and tell the bishop what he had seen, and how he, whom the Christians called St. Peter, had himself come to the consecration of the church which his friend king Sebert had raised to him.[123]

This king Sebert and his wife were buried at Westminster; and subsequently, through many vicissitudes, the great abbey, becoming more and more dear to the Church, to the

[123] "Ecce subito lux cœlestis emicuit. . . . Affuit cum apostolo multitudo civium supernorum . . . aures angelicæ voces mulcebat sonoritas, nares indicibilis odoris fragrantia perfundebat. . . . Nova Dei nupta, consecrante eo qui cœlum claudit et aperit, cœlestibus resplendet luminaribus. . . . Fixis tentoriis a dimidio milliario. . . . Rediit ad piscatorem piscium egregius piscator hominum. . . . Ego sum quem Christiani sanctum Petrum apostolum vocant, qui hanc ecclesiam meam hac nocte Deo dedicavi . . . quam mihi ille meus amicus Sebertus fabricavit." — Ric. Cirencester, *Speculum Hist. de Gestis Reg. Angl.*, ii. 27. Dugdale quotes no less than four original versions of this miracle, extracted from ancient English chronicles. Compare Baronius, *Annal.*, an. 610, c. 10, and *Acta SS. Bolland.*, January i. p. 246. Hook gives a plausible enough explanation of the tradition.

princes, nobles, and people, was the chosen burial-place of the kings and the royal family. It is still, in our time, as every one knows, the Pantheon of England, who has found no nobler consecration for the memory of her heroes, orators, and poets, her most glorious children, than to give them their last resting-place under the vaults of the old monastic sanctuary.[124] Near that sanctuary the royalty of England long sojourned; in one of its dependent buildings the House of Commons held its first meeting;[125] under its shadow the English Parliament, the most ancient, powerful, and glorious assembly in the world, has always flourished, and still remains. Never has a monument been more identified with the history of a people. Each of its stones represents a page of the country's annals!

Canterbury embodies the religious life of England, Westminster has been the centre of her political life and her real capital; and England owes Canterbury, as she owes Westminster, to the sons of St. Benedict.

Death of Queen Bertha,

Meanwhile a shadow was about to fall on the dawn of the faith in England. The noble granddaughter of Clotilda, the gentle and pious Queen Bertha, was dead. She preceded her husband in her death, as in her faith, and was buried beside the great Roman missionary who had given her the joy of seeing her husband's kingdom, and her husband himself, converted to Christianity.

613.

When the first successor of Augustin celebrated the solemn consecration of the great monastic church which was to be the burying-place, or, as they said then, the bed of rest (*thalamus*) for Christian kings and primates, the remains of the queen, and of the first archbishop of Canterbury, were transferred thither; those of the queen were laid in front of the altar sacred to St. Martin, the great

[124] Chatham, Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Grattan, Canning, Peel — all the great modern orators and statesmen, the poets, the admirals, the generals slain on the battle-field — there repose by the side of Edward the Confessor, and the kings and heroes of the middle ages. The words of Nelson at the moment of beginning the battle of Aboukir, "Now for a peerage or Westminster Abbey!" will be remembered by our readers. In our day the custom has been introduced of burying the great military chiefs at St. Paul's. Nelson and Wellington both rest in the vaults of the church which bears the name and occupies the site of the first foundation of Augustin's companion.

[125] It was in the fine chapter-house of Westminster Abbey that the Commons sat. Although their violent debates were lamented as disturbing the monastic worship, they remained there till the Reformation; when St. Stephen's Chapel, on the site of which the present House of Commons is placed, was allotted to them.

wonder-worker of Gaul, and those of the primate before the altar of his father and friend, St. Gregory.[126] Three years later, Ethelbert, who had married again, also died, and was buried by Bertha's side in the Church of St. Augustin. He reigned fifty-six years, twenty of which he had been a Christian. "He was," says Bede, "the first English king who ascended to heaven, and the Church numbered him among her saints."[127]

And of King Ethelbert, 24th Feb., 616.

Laurence thus remained the sole survivor of all who had taken part, twenty years before, in the famous conference in the isle of Thanet, at which the Saxon king and Frankish queen met the Roman missionaries. His companion, Peter, the first abbot of the monastery of St. Augustin, was drowned on the French coast, some time before, while fulfilling a mission on which King Athelbert had sent him. Laurence had thus to encounter all alone the storm which burst forth immediately after the death of Ethelbert. The conversion of that monarch had not insured that of all his people; and Eadbald, his son who succeeded to the throne, had not embraced Christianity along with his father. The looseness of his morals had helped to keep him in idolatry. When he became king he wished to marry his father's widow, the second wife whom Ethelbert had married after the death of Bertha. This kind of incest, with which St. Paul reproached the first Christians of Corinth,[128] was only too consonant with the usages of several of the Teutonic races;[129] but such a case had been anticipated, and formally forbidden in Gregory's reply to Augustin, when consulted as to the matrimonial relations of the Saxons. This was not Eadbald's only crime. He gave himself up to such transports of fury that he was commonly regarded as beside himself, and possessed with a demon. But his example sufficed to draw into apostasy those who had embraced Christian faith and chastity only from motives of fear, or from a desire to stand well with King Ethelbert.

His successor Eadbald, remaining a pagan, instigates the apostasy of his subjects.

The tempest which threatened to ingulf the recent Christianity of England, became more and more formidable when

[126] Guillelm Thorne, *Chron. S. August.*, p. 1765; Thomas de Elmham, *Hist. Monast. S. August.*, p. 432, ed. Hardivicke; Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 26.

[127] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. iii. February, p. 470.

[128] 1 Corinth. v. 1.

[129] Kemble, *Saxons in England*, ii. 407.

the death of Sebert, nephew of Ethelbert, and founder of Westminster, raised to the sovereignty of the kingdom of Essex his three sons, who, like the son of the king of Kent, had remained pagans. They immediately resumed the public practice of the idolatry which they had but for a short time foregone during the life of their father, and gave full liberty to all their subjects to worship idols. At the same time they still went occasionally to witness the ceremonies of the Christian worship; and one day, when the bishop Mellitus was administering, in their presence, the communion to the faithful, they said to him, with the freedom of their barbarian pride, "Why do you not offer us that white bread which you gave to our father, and which you continue to give to the people in your church?" "If you will be washed," answered the bishop, "in the fountain of salvation, as your father was, you may, like him, have your share of the holy bread; otherwise, it is impossible."

Reaction to heathenism among the East Saxons.

Expulsion of the Bishop of London.

"We have no desire," replied the princes, "to enter your fountain — we have no need of it; but we want to refresh ourselves with that bread:" and as they insisted on it, the bishop repeated again that it was needful that they should be cleansed from all sin before being admitted to the communion. Then they flew into a rage, and ordered him to quit their kingdom with all that belonged to him: "Since you will not gratify us in a matter so simple, you shall stay no longer in our country."[130]

The Bishop of London thus driven away, crossed the Thames, and came into the kingdom of Kent, in order to confer with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Rochester as to the course he should pursue. These were the only three bishops of the Christian church in England, and all three lost courage in presence of the new peril which threatened them. They decided that it was better that they should all return to their own country, there to serve God in freedom, than that they should remain uselessly among barbarians who had revolted from the faith. The two bishops were the first to fly, and crossed over to France. Laurence prepared to

Archbishop Laurence wishes to leave England.

[130] "Auxit procellam hujus perturbationis mors Sabercti. . . . Barbari inflati stultitia dicebant: Quare non et nobis panem nitidum porrigis. . . . Si vultis ablui fonte illo salutari. . . . Nolumus fontem illum intrare . . . si non vis adsentire nobis in tam facili causa quam petimus, non poteris jam in nostra provincia demorari." — Bede, ii. 5.

follow them, but in the night before his intended departure, wishing to pray and to weep without restraint over that English Church which he had helped to found a quarter of a century before, and which he was now obliged to abandon, he had his bed placed in the church of the monastery where reposed Augustin, Ethelbert, and Bertha. Scarcely had he fallen asleep when St. Peter appeared to him, as Jesus Christ had erewhile appeared to St. Peter himself when the prince of the apostles, flying from Nero's persecution, met on the Appian Way his divine Master coming towards Rome, there to be, in his default, a second time crucified.[131] The prince of the apostles overwhelmed with reproaches, and even scourged till the blood came, the bishop who was ready to abandon Christ's flock to the wolves, instead of braving martyrdom to save it.

On the morrow Lawrence showed his bruised and bleeding sides to the king, who, at the sight, asked who had dared thus to maltreat such a man as he. "It was St. Peter," said the bishop, "who inflicted on me all these blows and sufferings for your salvation."[132] Eadbald, moved and terrified, renounced idolatry, gave up his incestuous marriage, and promised to do his best for the protection of the Church. He called the two bishops, Mellitus and Justus, back from France, and sent them back to their dioceses to re-establish the faith in all freedom. After his conversion he continued to serve God with his people; he even built a new church dedicated to the Holy Virgin, in the monastery founded by St. Augustin, where he reckoned upon being buried beside his father and mother.

After the vision of St. Peter, he is retained by King Eadbald, who is converted.

But he had not the same authority over the other Saxon realms with which Ethelbert had been invested in his capacity of Bretwalda, or military chief of the Saxon federation. He could not succeed in restoring Mellitus to his diocese. The princes of Essex who had expelled him had all perished in a war with the Saxons of the West; but their

[131] Every one has seen at Rome, on the Appian Way, the church called *Domine quo vadis*, built on the spot where, according to tradition, St. Peter put that question to the Lord, who answered him, *Vado Romam iterum crucifigi*. — S. Ambr., *Contra Auxentium*.

[132] "Flagellis arctioribus afficiens. . . . An mei, inquit, oblitus es exempli qui pro parvulis Christi . . . vincula, verbera, carceres, afflictiones, ipsam postremo mortem, mortem autem crucis, ab infidelibus et inimicis Christi ipse cum Christo coronandus pertuli. . . . Retecto vestimento . . . quantis esset verberibus laceratus ostendit. Qui . . . inquirens quis tanto viro ausus esset plagas infligere." — Bede, ii. 6.

subjects persevered in idolatry, and the people of London offered the most determined resistance to the re-establishment of the Roman bishop, declaring that they greatly preferred their idolatrous priests.[133]

Defection of East Anglia.

The kingdom of Essex seemed thus altogether lost to the faith; and as to East Anglia, the conversion of its king, Redwald, had not been serious and permanent. No sooner had he returned from the visit to Ethelbert, during which he received baptism, than he allowed himself to be brought back to the worship of his fathers by the influence of his wife and his principal councillors; but he made the same concession to the new religion which had been already accorded to it by a Roman emperor — a concession much more worthy of a Cæsar of the Roman decadence than of the impetuous instincts of a barbarian king. He vouchsafed to assign to the Son of the only true God a place by the side of his Scandinavian deities, and established two altars in the same temple — the one for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the other for the victims offered to the idols.[134]

Of all the conquests made by the envoys of Gregory, there remained now only a portion of the country and of the people of Kent surrounding the two great monastic sanctuaries of Canterbury, — the metropolitan church dedicated to Christ, and the abbey of St. Augustin, then bearing the names of St. Peter and St. Paul. Roman missionaries, one after another, succeeded to the government of these two monasteries, which were now the only centres in which the fire of Christian life still burned in England. During more than a century all the abbots of St. Augustin's monastery were chosen from among the Roman monks, and probably from those who came from Mount Cœlius to follow or join him.[135]

[133] "Nec, licet auctoribus perditis, excitatum ad scelera vulgus potuit recorrigi. . . . Londonienses episcopum recipere noluerunt, idololatris magis pontificibus servire gaudentes. Non enim tanta erat ei, quanta patri ipsius regni potestas, ut etiam nolentibus ac contradicentibus paganis antistitem suæ posset ecclesiæ reddere." — Bede, ii. 6, 7.

[134] "Rediens domum, ab uxore et quibusdam perversis doctoribus seductus, in eodem fano et altare haberet ad sacrificium Christi et arulam ad victimas demoniorum." — Bede, iii. 15. Bede adds that in his lifetime there was a king of East Anglia who in his childhood had seen that temple still standing.

[135] The succession of these abbots, as given by Thomas Elmham in his chronicle of the Abbey of St. Augustin, is as follows: John, † 618; Rufinianus, † 626; Gratiosus, † 638; this last, *Romanus natione*, as well as his

2d Feb., 619.

624.

Mellitus, Justus, and Honorius companions and successors of Augustin at Canterbury.

In the archiepiscopal see, Laurence, who died three years after his reconciliation to the new king, was succeeded by Mellitus, who thus finally renounced all idea of again settling among the Saxons of the east. After Mellitus, who, though tortured by the gout, showed an indefatigable devotion to his apostolic duties, Justus, the bishop of Rochester, became archbishop. Like Augustin, he received the *pallium*, along with the privilege of ordaining bishops at his pleasure, a privilege conferred upon him by the Pope Boniface V., careful, as his predecessor Boniface IV. had been, to maintain the mission which Gregory had bequeathed to the special charge of the Pontiff. The Pope had received letters from King Eadbald which filled him with comfort and hope; and in placing under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Justus the English not only of Kent but of all the neighboring kingdoms, he exhorted him to persevere with commendable patience in the work of the redemption of the English people.[135]

624-627.

Justus occupied the archbishop's throne for three years only, and was succeeded by Honorius, also a disciple of St. Gregory and St. Augustin, and the last of the companions of the great missionary who was to fill his place in the primacy of the new Christian kingdom.

The Northumbrian Saxons.

In the midst of these mistakes, perils, and difficulties, and while the third successor of Augustin maintained, as best he could, the remains of the Roman mission in the still modest and often menaced metropolis of Canterbury, the horizon suddenly brightened toward the north of England. An event occurred there which seemed to realize the first designs of St. Gregory, and to open new and vast fields for the propagation of the gospel. It is in this northern region that the principal interest of the great drama which gave England to the Church is henceforth to be concentrated.

successor Petronius, † 654; Nathaniel, "quondam cum Mellito a Justo a Roma ad Angliam destinatus," † 667; after him the celebrated Adrian, the African, whose successor Albin, elected in 708, was the first *de gente nostra*, says the historian, and was, moreover, the disciple of Adrian, a great Latinist, Hellenist, and *collaborateur* of Bede.

[135] "Hoc illa repensatione vobis collatum est, qua injuncto ministerio jugiter persistentes, laudabili patientia redemptionem gentis illius expectastis." — Bede, ii. 8.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST MISSION IN NORTHUMBRIA — ITS SUCCESSES AND ITS DISASTER -- BISHOP PAULINUS AND KING EDWIN.

Extent and origin of the Anglo-Saxon settlements in Northumbria; thanks to their compatriot Bede, their history is better known than that of the others. — Ida and Ella, founders of the two kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia; Bamborough and the Fair Traitress. — War of the Northumbrians and Britons: Ethelfrid the Ravager, conqueror of the Welsh and of the Scots under Aidan, the friend of St. Columba. — Edwin, representing the rival dynasty, a refugee in East Anglia; on the point of being delivered over to his enemies, he is saved by the queen; vision and promise. — He becomes king of Northumbria and Bretwalda; list of Bretwaldas. — He marries the Christian Ethelburga, daughter of the king of Kent. — Mission of Bishop Paulinus, who accompanies the princess to York. — Influence of women in the conversion of the Saxons. — Fruitless preaching of Paulinus; letters of Boniface V. to the king and queen. — Edwin saved from the poniard of an assassin; birth of his daughter; war against the West Saxons. — Hesitation of Edwin; last effort of Paulinus. — Edwin promises to accept the faith after consulting his parliament. — Speeches of the high priest and of the chief captain. — Baptism of Edwin and of his nobility. — Bishopric and monastic cathedral of York. — The king and the bishop labor for the conversion of the Northumbrians. — General baptism by immersion. — Paulinus to the south of the Humber. — Foundations of Southwell and Lincoln. — Consecration of Honorius, fourth successor of Augustin at Canterbury. — Letter of Pope Honorius to the two metropolitans and to King Edwin. — Prosperous reign of Edwin. — Conversion of East Anglia; foundation of Edinburgh; conquest of Anglesea; public security; the woman and the foster-child; the copper cups; the *tufa of* the Bretwalda. — League of the Saxons and Britons of Mercia against the Saxons of Northumbria: Cadwallon and Penda. — Edwin is killed. — Flight of Paulinus and Ethelburga. — Overthrow of Christianity in Northumbria and East Anglia. — Check of the Roman missionaries; their virtues and their faults. — There remain to them only the metropolis and the abbey of St. Augustin at Canterbury, which continue to be the two citadals of Roman influence.

Origin and extent of the kingdom of Northumbria.

Of all the settlements made by the Teutonic conquerors of Britain, that of the Angles to the north of the river Humber, which seems to divide into two parts the island of Great Britain, and from which is derived the name of Northumbria, was, beyond comparison, the most important. This kingdom occupied

the whole eastern coast from the mouth of the Humber to the Firth of Forth, including the existing counties of York, Durham, and Northumberland, with all the south-eastern portion of modern Scotland. To the west it extended to the borders of the British territories of Cambria and Strathclyde, and even approached, on the frontiers of Caledonia, that new kingdom of the Scots of Ireland which the great missionary Columba had just inaugurated.

Its history the best known through the Northumbrian Bede.

Northumbria was not merely the largest kingdom of the Saxon Heptarchy — it is also that whose history is the most animated, dramatic, and varied — the richest in interesting and original characters. It is that, in short, where the incidents of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon conquerors, and of the propagation of monastic institutions, appear to us in fullest light. This is naturally explained by the fact that it is the birthplace of the Venerable Bede. This great and honest historian — the English Gregory of Tours, and the father of British history — was born and always lived in Northumberland. Hence in his interesting narratives a natural prominence is given to the men and the affairs of his native region, along with an exact and detailed reproduction of the local traditions and personal recollections which he treasured up and repeated with such scrupulous care.

517. Bede informs us that about a century after the first landing of the Saxons, under Hengist, in the country of Kent, their neighbors, the Angles, crossing the North Sea, founded on the opposite coast of Britain two colonies, long distinct, sometimes united, but finally combined together under the name of Northumbria.[137] The wall anciently raised by the Emperor Severus from the mouth of the Solway to that of the Tyne to check the Caledonian incursions, was their boundary. The oldest of the two kingdoms was that of the Bernicians to the north. Their chief,

Ida, founder of the kingdom of Bernicia.

Ida — who, like Hengist, claimed to be a descendant of Odin — established his residence in a fortress which he called Bamborough, after his wife Bebba, with that conjugal reverence so often illustrated even among the most savage Germans. The British bards, in return, have named this queen the Fair Traitress, because she was of British origin, and fought in the foremost ranks on the

[137] United from 588 to 633; separated at the death of Edwin in 634; and reunited anew under Oswald and Oswy.

field of battle against her countrymen.[138] The imposing remains of this fortress, situated on a detached rock on the coast, still surprise and arrest the traveller. From this point the invasion of the Angles spread over the fertile valleys of the Tweed and Tyne.

The second colony, that of the Deïrians, to the south, was concentrated principally in the valley of the Tees and in the extensive region which is now known as Yorkshire. The first chief of the Deïrians of whom anything is known, was that Alla or Ella, whose name — pronounced by the young slaves exposed for sale in the Forum — suggested to St. Gregory the hope of soon hearing the Hallelujah echo through his kingdom.[139] This region, to the north of the Humber, was precisely that which had suffered most from the Caledonian incursions; and, according to some authors, the Saxons of Hengist, called in the character of allies by the Britons to their aid, were already established before the arrival of the Deïrian colony. But Ida and his Angles would not in any character hold tenure under their Germanic compatriots from the south of the island, and instead of fighting against the Picts or the Scots they leagued themselves with them to crush the ill-starred Britons.

Ella, founder of the kingdom of Deïra. 559-588.

Ida, who had twelve sons, and who reigned twelve years, used fire and sword against the natives with such animosity that the British bards surnamed him the *Man of Fire*, or the *Great Burner*. They withstood him to the last extremity, and he fell in battle against them. But his grandson, Ethelfrid, took a terrible revenge. He was Ella's son-in-law; and at the death of the latter, and to the prejudice of the rights of the chief's son, Ethelfrid reunited the two kingdoms of Deïra and Bernicia, and mustering to his own standard all the Anglo-Saxons of Northumbria, he subdued or massacred a greater multitude of the Britons than any other of the invading chiefs.[140] He was, says Bede, the ravaging wolf of Holy Writ: in the morning he devoured his prey, and in the evening he divided his spoil. The vanquished, who had

547-559.

588.

Ethelfrid the Ravager,

[138] A. DE LA BORDERIE, *Luttes des Bretons Insulaires contre les Anglo-Saxons*, p. 155.

[139] See *ante*, p. 145.

[140] "Nemo in tribunis, nemo in regibus plures eorum terras, exterminatis vel subjugatis indigenis, aut tributarias genti Anglorum, aut habitabiles fecit." —BEDE, i. 34.

called his grandfather the Burner, had only too good cause to call Ethelfrid the Ravager.

Conqueror of the Scots and Britons. The greatness of Northumbria due to Lim. 588-616.

He had not, however, like his predecessors, the Caledonians for auxiliaries. They had become Christians, thanks to the apostolic zeal of Columba and his Irish missionaries; and far from seconding the pagan invaders, the Dalriadian Scots, recently established in Great Britain,[141] came to the succor of the Britons, who were their fellow-Christians. Their king, Aïdan — the same who had been consecrated by Columba, the monastic apostle of Caledonia — marched against Ethelfrid at the head of a numerous army. But his friend, the holy monk of Iona, was no longer there, as of old,[142] to protect him with his prayers, and aid him with his ardent sympathies. The Scots and the Saxons met at Degstane, near the existing frontier of England and Scotland. After a desperate struggle the Scots army was cut to pieces; and this defeat put an end forever to any desire on the part of the northern Celts to undertake the defence of their brethren of the south against the Teutonic conquerors.

603.

Having conquered the Scots, the formidable heathen threw himself on the Britons of Wales; and it was then that he fulfilled the prophecy of Augustin by exterminating the twelve hundred monks of Bangor. After this he completed the conquest of Northumbria, and fell, ten years later, in an encounter with his countrymen, the East Angles, under the command of that King Redwald whom we have seen professing Christianity for a time to please King Ethelbert.[143]

607 or 613.

East Anglia, as the name itself indicates, was occupied by a colony of the same race as the Angles of Northumbria. On the death of the first Christian king of Kent, Redwald inherited the title of Bretwalda, which gave him a certain military supremacy over the whole Anglo-Saxon federation. He had given shelter to the son of Ella, who, while still a child, had been dethroned by his brother-in-law, the terrible Ethelfrid. This young prince, named Edwin, grew up at Redwald's court, and had even been married to the daughter of his protector. Ethelfrid, seeing in him a rival and a successor, em-

616.

Edwin, brother-in-law of Ethelfrid, but representing the

[141] "Rex Scotorum qui Britanniam inhabitant." — Bede, i. 34. See *ante*, p. 42.

[142] See *ante*, p. 55.

[143] See *ante*, p. 193.

ployed by turns threats and bribes to induce Redwald to surrender the royal exile. The East Anglian prince was on the point of yielding, when one of the friends of Edwin came by night to apprise him of his danger, and offered to conduct him to a place of refuge, where neither Redwald nor Ethelfrid should be able to discover him. "No," replied the young and generous exile, "I thank you for your good will, but I shall do nothing. Why should I begin again to wander a vagabond through every part of the island, as I have too much done? If I must die, let it be rather by the hand of this great king than by that of a meaner man." Notwithstanding, moved and agitated by the news, he went out, and seated himself on a rock before the palace, where he remained for a long time alone and unnoticed, a prey to agonizing uncertainty.[144]

rival dynasty, takes refuge with the East Angles.

All at once he beheld before him, in the midst of the darkness, a man whose countenance and dress were unknown to him, who asked him what he did there alone in the night, and added, "What wilt thou promise to him who shall rid thee of thy grief, by dissuading Redwald from delivering thee up to thy enemies, or doing thee any harm?" "All that may ever be in my power," answered Edwin. "And if," continued the unknown, "he promised to make thee king, and a king more powerful than all your ancestors, and all the other kings in England?" Edwin promised anew that his gratitude would be commensurate with such a service. "Then," said the stranger, "if he who shall have exactly foretold to you such great fortunes, offers you counsels more useful for your welfare and your life than any of your fathers or kinsmen have ever received, do you consent to follow them?" The exile swore that he would implicity obey him by whom he should be rescued from such great peril and made king.

Vision and promise of Edwin.

Thereupon the unknown placed his right hand upon his head, saying, "When a like sign shall be shown thee, then recall this hour — thy words and thy promise." With this he disappeared so suddenly, that Edwin believed he had spoken not with a man but with a spirit.[145] A moment after

[144] "Si ergo vis, hac ipse hora te educam. . . . Gratias quidem ago benevolentiæ tuæ. . . . Quin potius, si moriturus sum, ille me magis quam ignobilior quisquam morti tradat. . . . Solus ipse mœstus in lapide pervigil . . . cum diu tacitus mentis angoribus et cæco carperetur igni." — BEDE, ii. 12.

[145] "Quid mercis dare velis ei qui. . . . Quid si etiam regem te futurum . . . ita ut omnes qui ante te reges in gente Anglorum fuerant potestate transcendas. . . . Tum ille tertio: Si autem qui tibi tanta taliaque dona vera-

his friend came running to announce that he had no longer anything to fear, and that King Redwald, having confided his project to the queen, had been dissuaded by her from his breach of faith.

This princess, whose name has been unfortunately forgotten, had, like most of the Anglo-Saxon women, an all-powerful influence in the heart of her husband. More happily inspired than when she had induced him to renounce the baptism which he had received when with Ethelbert,[146] she showed him how unworthy it would be to sell for gold his soul, and what is more, his honor, which she esteemed the most precious of all jewels.[147]

Edwin becomes king of the Northumbrians.

Under the generous influence of the queen, Redwald not only refused to give up the exiled prince, but having sent back the ambassadors intrusted with the costly presents of Ethelfrid, he declared war against him. The result was that, Ethelfrid having been defeated and slain, Edwin was established as king in Northumbria by his protector Redwald, who was now the chief of the Anglo-Saxon federation. The sons of Ethelfrid, although, on the mother's side, nephews of the new king, were obliged to fly, like Edwin himself in his youth. They went for refuge to the Dalriadian Scots, whose apostle Columba had been. We shall presently see what resulted from this exile, to Northumbria and the whole of England.

616.

Like his brother-in-law Ethelfrid, Edwin reigned over the two united kingdoms of Deïra and Bernicia; and, like him, he waged a vigorous war against the Britons of Wales.

624.

Having thus become the dreaded chief of the Angles of the North, he found himself esteemed and sought after by the East Angles, who on the death of their king, Redwald, offered him the sovereignty. But Edwin preferred to repay the protection which he had received from Redwald and his wife by leaving the kingdom of East Anglia to their son. He reserved, however, the military supremacy which Redwald had exercised, as well as the title of Bretwalda, which had passed from the

Edwin becomes Bretwalda.

citer prædixerit. . . . Cum hoc ergo tibi signum advenerit, memento hujus temporis, ac loquelæ nostræ, et ea quæ nunc promittis adimplere ne differas. His dictis, ut ferunt, repente disparuit." — Bede.

[146] See *ante*, p. 199.

[147] "Postquam cogitationem suam reginæ in secreto revelavit, revocavit eum ille ab intentione . . . ammonens quia nulla ratione conveniat . . . immo fidem suam, quæ omnibus ornamentis pretiosior est amore pecuniæ perdere." — Bede, *loc. cit.*

king of Kent to the king of East Anglia, but which, after being held by Edwin, was to remain always attached to the Northumbrian monarchy.

We have no precise information regarding the origin or the nature of the authority with which the Bretwalda was invested. It is apparent only that this authority, at first of a temporary and exclusively military character, extended, after the conversion of the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy, to ecclesiastical affairs. It is evident also that it added to the royal dignity the prestige of a real supremacy, all the more sought after that it was probably conferred, not only by the vote of the other kings, but of all the chiefs of the Saxon nobility.[148]

Thus then was accomplished the mysterious prediction of Edwin's nocturnal visitor; he was now a king, and more powerful than any of the English kings before him. For the supremacy of the Bretwalda, added to the vast extent of country occupied by the Angles of the North and East, secured to the king of Northumbria a preponderance altogether different from that of the petty kings of the South who had borne the title before him. Having reached this unhoped-for elevation, and having lost his first wife, a daughter of the king of East Anglia, he sought a second bride, and asked in marriage the sister of the king of Kent, the daughter of Ethelbert and Bertha, a descendant of Hengist and Odin through her father, and of St. Clotilda through her mother. She was called Ethelburga — that is, noble protectress; for this word *Ethel*, which appears so often in Anglo-Saxon names, is simply, as has been already remarked, the German *edel*, noble. Her

He marries the daughter of the first Christian king of Kent.

[148] The *caldormen* — those whom Bede calls *primates tribuni*. Bede gives the following as the succession of chiefs of the Anglo-Saxon federation, up to the time when the title of Bretwalda became extinct: —

About 560, Ella, king of Sussex.
" 577, Ceawlin, king of Wessex.
" 596, Ethelbert, king of Kent.
" 616, Redwald, king of East Anglia.
" 624, Edwin, } kings of Northumbria.
" 635, Oswald, }
" 645, Oswy, }

Lappenberg believes, with every appearance of reason, that after the death of Oswy, in 670, the authority of the Bretwalda passed to Wulfhere, king of Mercia, whose supremacy over the king of Essex is proved by Bede himself, iii. 30. Mackintosh interprets the term *Bret-walda* by that of *dompteur* or arbiter (*wielder*) of the Britons; but he gives no satisfactory reason for that etymology.

brother Eadbald, brought back by Archbishop Laurence to the Christian faith, at first refused the demand of the king of Northumbria. He answered that it was impossible for him to betroth a Christian virgin to a pagan, lest the faith and the sacraments of the true God should be profaned by making her live with a king who was a stranger to His worship. Far from being offended at this refusal, Edwin promised that, if the princess was granted to him, he would do nothing against the faith that she professed; but, on the contrary, she might freely observe all the rites of her religion, along with all who might accompany her to his kingdom — men or women, priests or laymen. He added that he would not himself refuse to embrace his wife's religion, if after having had it examined by the sages of his council he found it to be more holy and more worthy of God than his own.[149]

It was on these conditions that her mother Bertha had left her country and her Merovingian family to cross the sea and wed the king of Kent. The conversion of that kingdom had been the reward of her sacrifice. Ethelburga, destined, like her mother, and still more than she, to be the means of introducing a whole people to the knowledge of Christianity, followed the maternal example. She furnishes us with a new proof of the lofty part assigned to women in the history of the Germanic races, and of the noble and touching influence attributed to them. In England as in France, and everywhere, it is ever through the fervor and devotion of Christian women that the victories of the Church are attempted or achieved.

But the royal virgin was intrusted to the Northumbrians, only under the guardianship of a bishop charged to preserve her from all pagan pollution, by his exhortations, and also by the daily celebration of the heavenly mysteries. The king, according to Bede, had thus to espouse the bishop at the same time as the princess.[150]

Bishop Paulinus.

This bishop, by name Paulinus, was one of those still surviving Roman monks who had been sent by St. Gregory to the aid of Augustin. He had been twenty-five years a missionary in the south of Great Britain, before

[149] "Nec abnegavit se etiam eamdem subiturum esse religionem si tamen examinata a prudentibus sanctior et Deo dignior posset inveniri." — Bede, ii. 9.

[150] "Ordinatus episcopus . . . sic cum præfata virgine ad regem quasi comes copulæ carnalis advenit." — Bede, ii. 9.

he was consecrated bishop of Northumbria by the third successor of Augustin at Canterbury. Having arrived with Ethelburga in Edwin's kingdom, and having married them, he longed to see the whole of the unknown nation amongst whom he had come to pitch his tent, espoused to Christ. Unlike Augustin, after his landing on the shores of Kent, it is expressly stated that Paulinus was disposed to act upon the Northumbrian people before attempting the conversion of the king.[151] He labored with all his might to add some Northumbrian converts to the small company of the faithful that had accompanied the queen. But his efforts were for a long time fruitless; he was permitted to preach, but no one was converted. 21st July, 625.

In the mean time the successors of St. Gregory watched over his work with that wonderful and unwearying perseverance which is characteristic of the Holy See. Boniface V., at the suggestion, no doubt, of Paulinus, addressed two letters to the king and queen of Northumbria, which recall those of Gregory to the king and queen of Kent. He exhorted the glorious king of the English, as he calls him, to follow the example of so many other emperors and kings, and especially of his brother-in-law Eadbald, in submitting himself to the true God, and not to let himself be separated, in the future, from that dear half of himself, who had already received in baptism the pledge of eternal bliss.[152] He conjured the queen to neglect no effort to soften and inflame the hard and cold heart of her husband, to make him understand the beauty of the mysteries in which she believed, and the rich reward which she had found in her own regeneration, to the end that they twain whom human love had made one flesh here below, might dwell together in another life, united in an indissoluble union.[153] To his letters he added some

Intervention of Pope Boniface V. with the king of Northumbria. 22d Oct., 625.

[151] "Toto animo intendens ut gentem quam adibat, ad cognitionem veritatis advocans, uni viro sponso virginem castam exhiberet Christo. . . . Laboravit multum ut . . . aliquos, si forte posset, de paganis ad fidei gratiam prædicando converteret." — Bede, ii. 9.

[152] "Gloriosam conjugem vestram, quæ vestri corporis pars esse dignoscitur, æternitatis præmio per sancti baptismatis regenerationem illuminatam." — *Ibid.*

[153] "Insiste ergo, gloriosa filia, et summis conatibus duritiam cordis . . . insinuatione mollire dematura. . . . In undens sensibus ejus . . . quantum sit admirabile quod renata præmium consequi meruisti. Frigiditatem cordis . . . succende. . . . Ut quos copulatio carnalis affectus unum quodam modo corpus exhibuisse monstratur, hos quoque unitas fidei etiam post hujus vitæ transitum in perpetua societate conservet." — Bede, *loc. cit.*

modest presents, which testified assuredly either his poverty or the simplicity of the times: for the king, a linen shirt embroidered with gold and a woollen cloak from the east; for the queen, a silver mirror and an ivory comb; for both, the blessing of their protector St. Peter.

But neither the letters of the pope, nor the sermons of the bishop, nor the importunities of the queen, prevailed to triumph over the doubts of Edwin. A providential event, however, occurred to shake, without absolutely convincing him. On the Easter-day after his marriage an assassin, sent by the king of the West Saxons, made his way to the king, and, under the pretext of communicating a message from his master, tried to stab him with a double-edged poisoned dagger, which he held hidden under his dress. Prompted by that heroic devotion for their princes, which among all the Germanic barbarians coexisted with continual revolts against them, a lord named Lilla, having no shield at hand, threw himself between his king and the assassin, who struck with such force that his weapon reached Edwin even through the body of his faithful friend.[154] The same night, the night of the greatest of Christian festivals, the queen was delivered of a daughter. While Edwin was rendering thanks to his gods for the birth of his first-born, the Bishop Paulinus began, on his part, to thank the Lord Christ, assuring the king that it was He who by His prayers to the true God had obtained that the queen should bear her first child without mishap, and almost without pain. The king, less moved by the mortal danger that he had just escaped, than by the joy of being a father without peril or hurt to his beloved Ethelburga, was charmed by the words of Paulinus, and promised to renounce his idols for the service of Christ, if Christ granted him life and victory in the war which he was about to wage against the king who had tried to procure his assassination. As a pledge of his good faith, he gave the new-born child to the bishop, that he might consecrate her to Christ. This first child of the king, the first native Christian of the Northumbrian nation,[155] was baptized on Whit-

Edwin saved from the dagger of an assassin. 29th April, 625.

Birth and baptism of the first-born of Edwin.

[154] "Missus a rege . . . nomine Cuichelmo . . . qui habebat sicam bicipitem toxicatam. . . . Minister regi amicissimus . . . non habens scutum . . . mox interposuit corpus suum ante ictum pungentis, sed tanta vi hostis ferrum infixit, ut per corpus militis occisi etiam regem vulneraret." — Bede, *loc. cit.*

[155] "Ut regina sospes absque dolore gravi sobolem procrearet. . . . Prima

sunday (Pentecost), along with eleven persons of the royal household. She was named Eanfleda, and was destined, like most of the Anglo-Saxon princesses, to exercise an influence over the destiny of her country.

Edwin came back victorious from his struggle with the guilty king. On his return to Northumbria, though since giving his promise he had ceased to worship idols, he would not at once, and without further reflection, receive the sacraments of the Christian faith. But he made Paulinus give him more fully, what Bede calls, the reasons of his belief. He frequently conferred with the wisest and best instructed of his nobles upon the part which they would counsel him to take. Finally, being by nature a man sagacious and reflective, he passed long hours in solitude — his lips indeed closed, but discussing many things in the depths of his heart, and examining without intermission which religion he ought to prefer.[155]

The history of the Church, if I mistake not, offers no other example of an equally long and conscientious hesitation on the part of a pagan king. They all appear equally prompt alike for persecution or for conversion. Edwin, as the testimony of an incontestable authority reveals him to us, experienced all the humble efforts, the delicate scruples, of the modern conscience. A true priest has said with justice: "This intellectual travail of a barbarian moves and touches us. We follow with sympathy the searcher in his hesitations; we suffer in his perplexities; we feel that this soul is a sincere one, and we love it." [157]

Meanwhile Paulinus saw time passing away without the word of God which he preached being listened to, and without Edwin being able to bow the pride of his intelligence before the divine humility of the cross. Being informed of the prophecy and the promise which had put an end to the

de gente Nordanhymbrorum." — Bede, *loc. cit.* She married King Oswy, one of her father's successors. We shall see her take a part in the struggle between the monastic and the Celtic influence in Northumbria.

[156] "Non statim et inconsulte sacramenta fidei precipere voluit. . . . Verum primo diligentius . . . rationem fidei edissere et cum suis primatibus quos sapientiores noverat, curavit conferre, quod de his agendum arbitrarentur. Sed et ipse cum esset vir natura sagacissimus, sæpe diu solus residens, ore quidem tacito, sed in intimis cordis multa secum colloquens, quod sibi esset faciendum, quæ religio servanda tractabat." — Bede, *loc. cit.*

[157] Gorini, *Défense de l'Eglise*, vol. ii. p. 87. Nothing in this excellent work can surpass the author's refutation, step by step, of M. Augustin Thierry's narrative of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. Compare Faber, *Life of St. Edwin*, 1844, in the series of *Lives of the English Saints.*

exile of the king, he believed that the moment for recalling them to him had come.[158] One day when Edwin was seated by himself, meditating in the secret of his own heart upon the religion which he ought to follow, the bishop entered suddenly and placed his right hand upon his head, as the unknown had done in the vision, asking him if he recognized that sign.[159] The king, trembling, would have thrown himself at the feet of Paulinus, but he raised him up, and said gently, "You are now delivered by God's goodness from the enemies that you feared. He has given you the kingdom which you desired. Remember to accomplish your third promise, which binds you to receive the faith and to keep its commandments. It is thus only that after being enriched with the divine favor here, you will be able to enter with God into the fellowship of the eternal kingdom."

Last effort of Paulinus.

"Yes," answered Edwin at length, "I feel it; I ought to be, and I will be, a Christian." But, always true to his characteristic moderation, he stipulated only for himself. He said that he would confer with his great nobles, his friends, and his councillors, in order that, if they decided to believe as he did, they should be all together consecrated to Christ in the fountain of life.

The king promises conversion after having consulted Parliament.

Paulinus having expressed his approval of this proposal, the Northumbrian Parliament, or, as it was then called, the council of sages (*witena-gemot*), was assembled near to a sanctuary of the national worship, already celebrated in the time of the Romans and Britons, at Godmundham, hard by the gates of York. Each member of this great national council was, in his turn, asked his opinion of the new doctrine and worship.[160] The first who answered

Discussion in the assembly.

[158] According to M. Thierry, "this secret had probably escaped Edwin among the confidences of the nuptial couch." Bede says exactly the contrary, though without affirming anything. "Tandem ut verisimile videtur didicit (Paulinus) *in spiritu*, quod vel quale esset oraculum regi quondam cœlitus ostensum." — Bede, ii. 12.

[159] "Cum videret difficulter posse sublimitatem animi regalis ad humilitatem . . . vivificæ crucis inclinari. . . . Cum horis competentibus solitarius sederet, quid agendum sibi esset, quæ religio sequenda sedulus secum ipse scrutari consuesset, ingrediens ad eum quadam die vir Dei." — Bede, ii. 12.

[160] "Quibus auditus et rex suscipere se fidem et velle et debere respondebat. Verum adhuc cum amicis principibus, et consiliariis suis sese de hoc collaturum esse dicebat. . . . Habito enim cum sapientibus consilio, scisciabatur singillatim ab omnibus, qualis sibi doctrina eatenus inaudita . . . videretur. . . . His similia et cæteri majores natu ac regis consiliarii prosequebantur." — Bede, ii. 13.

was the high priest of the idols, by name Coïfi, a singular and somewhat cynical personage. "My opinion," said he, "is most certainly that the religion which we have hitherto followed is worth nothing; and this is my reason. Not one of your subjects has served our gods with more zeal than I have, and notwithstanding, there are many of your people who have received from you far greater gifts and dignities. But if our gods were not good for nothing, they would have done something for me who have served them so well. If then, after ripe examination, you have found this new religion which is preached to us more efficacious, let us hasten to adopt it." [161]

One of the great chiefs held different language, in which are revealed to us that religious elevation and poetic melancholy wherewith the minds of these Germanic heathens were often imbued. "You remember, perhaps," said he to the king, "what sometimes happens in the winter evenings whilst you are at supper with your caldormen and thanes; [162] while the good fire burns within, and it rains and snows, and the wind howls without, a sparrow enters at the one door and flies out quickly at the other. During that rapid passage it is sheltered from the rain and cold; but after that brief and pleasant moment it disappears, and from winter returns to winter again. Such seems to me to be the life of man, and his career but a brief moment between that which goes before and that which follows after, and of which we know nothing. If, then, the new doctrine can teach us something certain, it deserves to be followed." [163]

After much discourse of the same tendency, for the assembly seems to have been unanimous, the high priest Coïfi spoke again with a loftier inspiration than that of his first words. He expressed the desire to hear Paulinus speak of the God whose envoy he professed to be. The bishop, with permission of the king, addressed the assembly. When he had finished, the high priest cried, "For a long time I have understood the nothingness of all that we worshipped, for the more I endeavored to search for truth in it the less I

[161] "Profiteor quia nihil omnino virtutis, nihil utilitatis religio illa quam hucusque tenuimus. . . . Si autem Dii aliquid valerent." — Bede, ii. 13.

[162] "Cum ducibus ac ministris tuis." "*Mit thynem Ealdormannum and Thegnum*," is King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon translation of the words of Bede.

[163] "Alius optimatum regis subdidit: Talis mihi videtur, rex, vita hominum . . . quale cum te residente ad cœnam accenso foco in media et calido effecto cœnaculo . . . adveniens unus passerum domum citissime pervolaverit . . . mox de hieme in hiemen regrediens." — Bede, ii. 13.

found it; but now I declare without reserve that in this preaching I see the shining of the truth, which gives life and salvation and eternal blessedness. I vote, then, that we give up at once to fire and to the curse the altars which we have so uselessly consecrated."[164] The king immediately made a public declaration that he adhered to the gospel preached by Paulinus — that he renounced idolatry and adopted the faith of Christ. "But who," asked the king, "will be the first to overthrow the altars of the ancient gods, and to profane their sacred precincts?" "I," replied the high priest; whereupon he prayed the king to give him arms and a stallion, that he might the more thoroughly violate the rule of his order, which forbade him to carry arms and to mount ought but a mare. Mounted on the king's steed, girt with a sword, and lance in hand, he galloped towards the idols, and in the sight of all the people, who believed him to be beside himself, he dashed his lance into the interior of their temple. The profaning steel buried itself in the wall: to the surprise of the spectators, the gods were silent, and the sacrilege remained unpunished. Then the people, at the command of the high priest, proceeded to overthrow and burn the temple.[165]

Baptism of King Edwin, and of the nobility.

12th April, 627.

These things occurred in the eleventh year of Edwin's reign. The whole Northumbrian nobility and a large part of the people followed the example of the king, who was baptized with much solemnity on Easter-day (627) by Paulinus at York, in a wooden church, built in haste while the catechumens were prepared for baptism.[166] Immediately afterwards he built around this improvised sanctuary a large church in stone, which he had not time to finish, but which has since become the splendid Minster of York, and the metropolitan church of the north of England. The town of York had been already celebrated in the times of the Romans. The Emperor Severus and the father of Constantine had died there. The Northumbrians had made it their capital, and Edwin there

[164] "Unde suggero, o rex, ut templa et altaria quæ sine fructu utilitatis sacravimus ocius anathemati et igni contradamus." — Bede, ii. 3.

[165] "Ille respondit: Ego. . . . Rogavit sibi regem arma dare et equum emissarium quem ascendens . . . pergebat ad idola." — Bede, ii. 3. Compare the Saxon version quoted by Lingard, i. 30.

[166] "Accepit rex cum cunctis gentis suæ nobilibus ac plebe perplurima fidem et lavacrum. . . . Ipse doctori et antistiti suo Paulino sedem episcopatus donavit. . . . Baptizatus est ibi sed et alii nobiles et regii viri non pauci." — Bede, ii. 14.

placed the seat of the episcopate filled by his teacher Paulinus. Thus was realized the grand design of Gregory, who, thirty years before, at the commencement of the English mission, had instructed Augustin to send a bishop to York, and to invest him with the jurisdiction of metropolitan over the twelve suffragan bishopries which in imagination he already saw founded in the north of the country conquered by the Anglo-Saxons.[167]

627-633.

The king and the bishop labored together for six years for the conversion of the Northumbrian people, and even of the English population of the neighboring regions. The chiefs of the nobility and the principal servants of the king were the first to receive baptism, together with the sons of Edwin's first marriage. The example of a king was, however, far from being enough, among the Anglo-Saxons, to determine the conversion of a whole people; and the first Christian king and the first bishop of Northumbria did not, any more than Ethelbert and Augustin, think of employing undue constraint. Doubtless it required more than one effort on their part to overcome the roughness, the ignorance, the indifference of the heathen Saxons. But they had, at the same time, much encouragement, for the fervor of the people and their anxiety for baptism were often wonderful. Paulinus having gone with the king and queen, who several times accompanied him on his missions, to a royal villa far to the north, they remained there, all three, for thirty-six days together, and during the whole of that time the bishop did nothing else from morning till night than catechize the crowds that gathered from all the villages around, and afterwards baptize them in the river which flowed close by. At the opposite extremity of the country, to the south, the name of Jordan is still given to a portion of the course of the river Derwent, near the old Roman ford of Malton, in memory of the numerous subjects of Edwin that were there baptized by the Roman missionary.[168] Everywhere he baptized in the rivers or streams, for there was no time to build churches.[169] However, he built, near Edwin's principal

The king and bishop labor together for the conversion of the Northumbrians.

Baptism *en masse* by immersion.

[167] "Qui tuæ subjaceant ditioni . . . ita duntaxat ut si eadem civitas cum finitimis locis verbum Dei receperit, ipse quoque XII episcopos ordinet, et metropolitani honore perfruatur." — Bede, i. 29.

[168] *The Times* of 17th March, 1865.

[169] The Glen in Northumberland, the Swale, and especially the Derwent, in Yorkshire, are still mentioned among the rivers in which the bishop baptized thousands of converts by immersion.

palace, a stone church, whose calcined ruins were still visible after the Reformation, as well as a large cross, with this inscription: *Paulinus hic prædicavit et celebr. vit.*[170]

Passing the frontiers of the Northumbrian kingdom, Paulinus continued his evangelistic course among the Angles settled to the south of the Humber, in the maritime province of Lindsay. There also he baptized many people in the Trent; and long afterwards, old men, who had in their childhood received baptism at his hands, recalled with reverent tenderness the venerable and awe-inspiring stranger, whose lofty and stooping form, black hair, aquiline nose, and emaciated but imposing features, impressed themselves on every beholder, and proclaimed his southern origin.[171] The beautiful monastic church of Southwell consecrates the memory of the scene of one of those multitudinous baptisms; and it is to the mission of Bishop Paulinus on this side the Humber that we trace the foundation of that magnificent Cathedral of Lincoln, which rivals our noble Cathedral of Laon in its position, and even surpasses it in grandeur, and perhaps in beauty.[172]

He commences the Cathedral of Lincoln.

It was in the stone church (Bede always notes this detail most carefully) built by Paulinus at Lincoln, after the conversion of the chief Saxon of that town, with all his house, that the metropolitan bishop of York had to proceed to the consecration of the fourth successor of Augustin in the metropolitan see of Canterbury. Honorius was, like Paulinus, a monk of Mount Cœlius at Rome, and one of the first companions of St. Augustin in his mission to England. He was a disciple of St. Gregory, and had learned from the great pontiff the art of music, and it was he who led the choir of monks on the occasion of the first entrance of the missionaries, thirty years before, at Canterbury.[173] The Pope then reigning was also named Honorius, first of that name. He sent the *pallium* to each of the two metropolitans, and ordained that when God should take to himself one of the two, the

And there consecrates the fifth Archbishop of Canterbury. 628.

625 640.

[170] At Dewsbury, on the banks of the Calder. Alford, *Annales Anglo-Saxonicæ*, ap. Bolland., vol. vi. Oct., p. 118.

[171] "Quemdam seniorem . . . baptizatum a Paulino . . . præsente rege Adwino. . . . Quoniam effigiem ejusdem Paulini referre esset solitus. . . . Vir longæ staturæ, paululum incurvus, nigro capillo, facie macilenta, naso adunco perenni, venerabilis simul et terribilis aspectu." — Bede, ii. 16.

[172] All the most beautiful religious edifices of England — York, Lincoln, and Southwell — trace their origin to the episcopate of Paulinus. — Faber, *op. cit.*

[173] Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops*, pp. 53, 111.

other should appoint a successor, in order to avoid the delay of a reference to Rome, so difficult by reason of the great distance to be travelled by sea and land. In the eloquent letter which accompanied the *pallium*, he reminds the new archbishop that the great Pope Gregory had been his master, and should ever be his model, and that the whole work of the archbishops, his predecessors, had been but the fruit of the zeal of that incomparable pontiff.[174]

The Pope wrote also to King Edwin to congratulate him on his conversion and on the ardor and sincerity of his faith, and to exhort him to read much in the works of St. Gregory, whom he calls the Preacher of the English, and whom he recommends the king to take for his perpetual intercessor with God.[175] But when this letter reached England, Edwin was no more.

Prosperity and beneficence of the reign of Edwin.

The six years which passed between his conversion and his death may certainly be reckoned among the most glorious and happy that it was ever given to any Anglo-Saxon prince to know. He speedily raised Northumbria to the head of the Heptarchy. On the south, his ardent zeal for the faith which he had embraced after such ripe reflection extended its influence even to the populations which, without being subjected to his direct authority, yet belonged to the same race as his subjects. The East Angles, as we have seen, had offered him their crown, and he had refused it. But he used his influence over the young king, who owed to him his elevation to the throne, to induce him to embrace the Christian religion, with all his subjects. Eorpwald thus expiated the apostasy of his father; and Edwin thus paid the ransom of the generous pity that the royalty of East Anglia had lavished on his youth and his exile.

Conversion of the East Angles.

[174] "Dilectissimo fratri Honorio Honorius. . . . Exoramus ut vestram dilectionem in prædicatione Evangelii laborantem et fructificantem sectantemque magistri et capitis sui sancti Gregorii regulam perpeti stabilitate confirmet (redemptor) . . . ut fide et opere, in timore Dei et caritate, vestra adquisitio decessorumque vestrorum quæ per Domini Gregorii exordia pullulata convalescendo amplius extendatur . . . longa terrarum marisque intervalla, quæ inter nos ac vos obsistunt, ac et nos condescendere coegerunt, ut nulla possit ecclesiarum vestrarum jactura per cujuslibet occasionis obtentum quoque modo provenire: sed potius commissi vobis populi devotionem plenius propagare."—Ap. BEDAM, ii. 18.

[175] "Prædicatores vestri . . . Gregorii frequenter lectione occupati, præ oculis affectum doctrinæ ipsius, quam pro vestris animabus libenter exercuit, habetote: quatenus ejus oratio, et regnum vestrum populumque augeat, et vos omnipotenti Deo irreprehensibiles repræsentet."—*Ibid*, ii. 17,

On the north he extended and consolidated the Anglo-Saxon dominion as far as the isthmus which separated Caledonia from Britain. And he has left an ineffaceable record of his reign in the name of the fortress built upon the rock which commanded the entrance of the Forth, and which still lifts its sombre and alpine front — true Acropolis of the barbarous north — from the midst of the great and picturesque city of Edinburgh (*Edwin's burgh*).

On the west he continued, with less ferocity than Ethelfrid, but with no less valor and success, the contest of the Britons of Wales. He pursued them even into the islands of the channel which separates Great Britain from Ireland; and took possession of the Isle of Man and another isle which had been the last refuge of the Druids from the Roman dominion, and which, after its conquest by Edwin, took the name of the victorious race, *Angles-ey*.

Within his own kingdom he secured a peace and security so unknown both before and after his reign that it passed into a proverb; it was said that in the time of Edwin a woman with her new-born child might traverse England from the Irish Channel to the North Sea without meeting any one who would do her the least wrong. It is pleasant to trace his kindly and minute care of the well-being of his subjects in such a particular as that of the copper cups which he had suspended beside the fountains on the highways, that the passers-by might drink at their ease, and which no one attempted to steal, whether from fear or from love of the king. Neither did any one ever reproach him for the unwonted pomp which distinguished his train, not only when he went out to war, but when he rode peacefully through his towns and provinces, on which occasions the lance surmounted with a large tuft of feathers [176] — which the Saxons had borrowed from the Roman legions, and which they had made the sacred standard of the Bretwalda and the ensign of the supreme sovereignty in their confederation — was always carried before him in the midst of his military banners.

But all this grandeur and prosperity were about to be ingulfed in a sudden and great calamity.

[176] "Sicut usque hodie in proverbio dicitur, etiamsi mulier una cum recens nato parvulo vellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se lædente valeret. . . . Erectis stipitibus æreos caucos suspendi juberet. . . . Illud genus vexilli quod Romani *Tufam*, Angli vero *Tuuf* appellant." — Bede, ii. 16.

There were other Angles than those who, in Northumbria and East Anglia, were already subdued and humanized by the influence of Christianity: there remained the Angles of Mercia — the great central region stretching from the Humber to the Thames. The kingdom of Mercia was the last state organized out of the Anglo-Saxon conquest. It had been founded by that portion of the invaders who, finding all the eastern and southern shores of the island already occupied, were compelled to advance into the interior. It became the centre of the pagan resistance to, and occasional assaults upon, the Christian *Propaganda*, which was henceforth to have its headquarters in Northumbria. The pagans of Mercia found a formidable leader in the person of Penda, who was himself of royal extraction, or, as it was then believed, of the blood of Odin, and had reigned for twenty-two years, but who was inflamed by all the passions of a barbarian, and, above all, devoured with jealousy of the fortunes of Edwin and the power of the Northumbrians. Since Edwin's conversion these wild instincts were intensified by fanaticism. Penda and the Mercians remained faithful to the worship of Odin, whose descendants all the Saxon kings believed themselves to be. Edwin and the Northumbrians were, therefore, in their eyes no better than traitors and apostates. But more surprising still, the original inhabitants of the island, the Christian Britons, who were more numerous in Mercia than in any other Anglo-Saxon kingdom, shared and excited the hatred of the pagan Saxons against the converts of the same race. These old Christians, it cannot be too often repeated, always exasperated against the invaders of their island, took no account of the faith of the converted Angles, and would not on any terms hold communion with them.[177] The Welsh Britons, who maintained their independence, but who, for more than a century, had been constantly menaced, defeated, and humiliated by Ida, Ethelfrid, and Edwin, professed and nourished their antipathy with even greater bitterness.[178] Their chief, Ceadwalla or Cadwallon, the last hero of the Celtic race in Britain, at first overcome by Edwin and forced to seek refuge in Ireland and in Armorica,[179] had returned thence with rage redoubled, and with

Alliance of the heathen of Mercia and the British Christians against Edwin,

under Penda,

633-655

and Cadwallon.

[177] Bede, ii. 20. See vol. i. p. 687, note.
[178] Lappenberg, vol. i. p. 159. La Borderie, *op. cit.*, p. 216.
[179] See his amusing adventures in Richard of Cirencester, vol. ii. p. 32.

auxiliaries from the other Celtic races, to recommence the struggle against the Northumbrians. He succeeded in forming an alliance with Penda against the common enemy. Under these two chiefs an immense army, in which the British Christians of Wales jostled the pagans of Mercia, invaded Northumbria. Edwin awaited them at Hatfield, on the southern frontier of his kingdom. He was there disastrously defeated, and perished gloriously, sword in hand, scarce forty-eight years of age, dying a death which entitled him to be ranked amongst the martyrs.[180] His eldest son fell with him; the younger, taken prisoner by Penda, who swore to preserve his life, was infamously murdered. Northumbria was ravaged with fire and sword, and its recent Christianity completely obliterated. The most barbarous of the persecutors was not the idolatrous Penda, but the Christian Cadwallon, who, during a whole year, went up and down all the Northumbrian provinces massacring every man he met, and subjecting even the women and children to atrocious tortures before putting them to death. He was, says Bede, resolved to extirpate from the soil of Britain the English race, whose recent reception of Christianity only inspired this old Christian, intoxicated with blood and with a ferocious patriotism, with scorn and disgust.[181]

Northumbria is invaded.

Edwin is slain. 11th Oct., 633.

Christianity extinguished in Northumbria.

It is not known why Northumbria, after the death of Edwin and his son, was not subjugated and shared among the conquerors; but it remained divided, enslaved, and plunged once more into paganism. Deïra fell to Osric, cousin-german of Edwin; Bernicia to Eanfried, one of the sons of Ethelfrid, who had returned from his exile in Scotland. Both had received baptism: the one with his cousin at York; the other at the hands of the Celtic monks of Iona. But a pagan reaction was the inevitable consequence of the overthrow of the first Christian king of Northumbria. The two princes yielded to that reaction, and renounced their baptism, but

[180] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, die 12 Octobris.

[181] "Maxima est facta strages in Ecclesia vel gente Nordanhymbrorum. . . . Unus ex ducibus paganus, alter . . . pagano sævior. . . . Quamvis nomen et professionem haberet Christiani, adeo animo et moribus barbarus, ut ne sexui muliebri vel innocuæ parvulorum parceret ætati, quum universos atrocitate ferina morti per tormenta contraderet. . . . Totum genus Anglorum Britanniæ finibus erasurum se esse deliberans; sed nec religioni Christianæ quæ apud eos exorta erat, aliquid impendebat honoris." — Bede. ii. 20. Compare iii. 1.

without gaining anything thereby. The king of Deïra was killed in battle with the Britons; and the king of Bernicia was murdered at an interview which he had sought with the savage Cadwallon.

Flight of Paulinus and of Ethelburga.

Bishop Paulinus did not consider himself called upon to remain a witness of such horrors. His one thought was to place in safety the widow of King Edwin — that gentle Ethelburga who had been confided to him by her brother for a different destiny: he brought her back by sea to her brother's kingdom, with the daughter and the two youngest sons whom she had borne to Edwin. Even beside her brother, the king of Kent, she was afraid to keep them in England; and wishing to devote her own widowhood to God, she intrusted them to the king of the Franks, Dagobert, her cousin,[182] at whose court they died at an early age. As to Paulinus, who had left in charge of his church at York only a brave Italian deacon, of whom we shall speak hereafter, he found the episcopal see of Rochester vacant in consequence of the death of the Roman monk, who was the titular bishop, and who, sent by the primate to the Pope, had just been drowned in the Mediterranean. Paulinus was invested with this bishopric by the king and by the archbishop Honorius, whom he had himself consecrated at Lincoln; and there he died, far from his native land, after having labored during forty-three years for the conversion of the English.

Thus appeared to crumble away in one day and forever, along with the military and political pre-eminence of Northumbria, the edifice so laboriously raised in the north of England by the noble and true-hearted Edwin, the gentle and devoted Ethelburga, the patient and indefatigable Paulinus, and by so many efforts and sacrifices known to God alone. The last and most precious of Edwin's conquests was not

[182] The following is the table of the relationship between the queen of Northumbria and the king of Austrasia: —

CLOTAIRE I.

CARIBERT, king of Paris.	CHILPERIC I.
BERTHA, wife of Ethelbert.	CLOTAIRE II.
ETHELBURGA, wife of Edwin.	DAGOBERT I.

Dagobert mounted the throne of Austrasia in 628, three years after Ethelburga's marriage.

destined to survive him long. His young kinsman, the king of the East Angles, was no sooner converted than he fell beneath the poignard of an assassin; and, like Northumbria, East Anglia relapsed altogether into the night of idolatry.[183]

Repulse of the Romish missionaries everywhere, save in the kingdom of Kent.

After thirty-six years of continual efforts, the monastic missionaries sent by St. Gregory the Great had succeeded in establishing nothing, save in the petty kingdom of Kent. Everywhere else they had been baffled. Of the six other kingdoms of the Heptarchy, three — those of the Saxons of the South and of the West, and the Angles of the Centre [184] — remained inaccessible to them. The three last — those of the Saxons of the East, of the Angles of the East and North [185] — had successively escaped from them. And yet, except the supernatural courage which courts or braves martyrdom, no virtue seems to have been awanting to them. No accusation, no suspicion, impugns their all-prevailing charity, the fervent sincerity of their faith, the irreproachable purity of their morals, the unwearying activity, the constant self-denial, and austere piety of their whole life.

How, then, are we to explain their defeat, and the successive failure of their laborious efforts? Perhaps they were wrong in not sufficiently following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles — in not preaching enough to the humble and poor — in not defying with proper boldness the wrath of the great and powerful. Perhaps they were wrong in addressing themselves too exclusively to the kings and warlike chiefs, and in undertaking nothing, risking nothing, without the concurrence, or against the will, of the secular power.[186] Hence, without doubt, these changes of fortune, these reactions, and sudden and complete relapses into idolatry, which followed the death of their first protectors; hence, also, these fits of timidity, of discouragement, and despair, into which we see them falling under the pressure of the sudden changes and mistakes of their career. Perhaps, in short, they had not at first understood the national character of the Anglo-Saxons, and did not know how to gain and to master their minds, by reconciling their own Italian customs and ideas with the roughness, the independence, and the manly energy of the populations of the German race.

[183] Bede, ii. 15.
[184] Wessex, Sussex, Mercia.
[185] Essex, East Anglia, Northumbria.
[186] Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. pp. 40, 74.

At all events, it is evident that new blood was needed to infuse new life into the scattered and imperfect germs of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, and to continue and carry out the work of the missionary monks of Mount Cœlius.

These monks will always have the glory of having first approached, broken, and thrown seed upon this fertile but rebellious soil. Others must water with the sweat of their toil the fields that they have prepared, and gather the harvest they have sown. But the sons of St. Gregory will none the less remain before God and man the first laborers in the conversion of the English people. And, at the same time, they did not desert their post. Like mariners intrenched in a fort built in haste on the shore that they would fain have conquered, they concentrated their strength in their first and indestructible foundations at Canterbury, in the metropolitan monastery of Christ Church and the monastery *extra muros* of St. Augustin, and there maintained the storehouse of Roman traditions and of the Benedictine rule, along with that citadel of apostolic authority which was for centuries the heart and head of Catholic England.

BOOK XI.

THE CELTIC MONKS AND THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

CHAPTER I.

ST. OSWALD AND THE REVIVAL OF CHRISTIANITY IN NORTHUMBRIA.

The Celtic monks revive, in Northumbria, the work of conversion abandoned by the Roman monks. — Oswald, son of Ethelfrid, the Ravager, an exile among the Scots, is baptized according to the Celtic rite. — He returns to Northumbria, plants there the first cross, and gains the battle of Denisesburn over the Mercians and Britons. — He reigns over the whole of Northumbria, and makes it the predominant power in the Anglo-Saxon Confederation. His desire to convert his kingdom to Christ. — The Italian deacon, James, keeps Christianity alive in Deïra; but in Bernicia everything has yet to be. — Oswald begs for missionaries from the Celtic monasteries. — Failure of the first missionary from Iona: he is succeeded by Aïdan. — Bede's eulogy of the Abbots of Iona. — The religious capital of the north of England is fixed in the monastic isle of Lindisfarne: description of that island: its resemblance to Iona. — Authority of the abbots of Lindisfarne even over the bishops. — Virtues of the monk-bishop Aïdan: his disinterestedness: his care of children and slaves. — King Oswald acts as assistant and interpreter to the missionary Aïdan. — Oswald marries the daughter of the King of Wessex, and converts his father-in-law. — Note regarding the local and provincial opposition of the monks of Bardeney. — War with Penda, chief of the coalition of the Britons and Mercians. — Battle of Maserfeld: Oswald is killed there at the age of thirty-eight. —Venerated as a martyr. — Miracles wrought at his tomb. — Prediction of Bishop Aïdan with regard to his hand.

THE work of conversion among the English, though interrupted in the south by a pagan reaction, and buried, on the north, in the overthrow of the first Christian king of Northumbria, was to undergo but a momentary eclipse — the providential prelude of a more sustained effort and decisive triumph. The spiritual conquest of the island, abandoned for a time by the Roman missionaries, was now about to be taken up by the Celtic monks. The Italians had made the

first step, and the Irish now appeared to resume the uncompleted work. What the sons of St. Benedict could only begin, was to be completed by the sons of St. Columba. The great heart of the first abbot of Iona, inspiring his spiritual descendants, was thus to accomplish the noble design of the holy Gregory. The spirit of unity, submission, and discipline, was to be instilled into their minds, somewhat against their will, by Wilfrid, a Saxon convert; and their unwearied activity and invincible perseverance were destined to triumph over every obstacle, stimulating and seconding the zeal of the Italian missionaries and reviving the sacred fire amongst the Benedictine monks, into whose ranks they finally fell. Thus wrought upon, moulded and penetrated on every side by monastic influence, the whole nation of the Anglo-Saxons was soon to acknowledge the law of Christ. Its kings, its monks, its bishops and saints, were to take a foremost place among the children of the Church, the civilizers of Europe, the benefactors of mankind, and the soldiers of the Cross. The history of this transformation we shall attempt to set forth in the narrative which follows.

Forty-eight years after Augustine and his Roman monks landed on the shores of pagan England, an Anglo-Saxon prince invoked the aid of the monks of Iona in the conversion of the Saxons of the north.

This prince was Oswald, son of Ethelfrid the Ravager, and of the sister of the martyred King Edwin. After the defeat and death of his father, the son of the great enemy and conquerer of the Scots had, while yet a child, sought a refuge, along with his brothers and a numerous train of young nobles, among the Scots themselves. He there found the same generous hospitality which, twelve centuries later, the descendants of the Anglo-Saxons showed to the French princes, descendants of a race continually and gloriously hostile to England. In that exile he passed the seventeen years of the reign of his uncle Edwin, as Edwin himself had lived in exile during the reign of his brother-in-law and persecutor Ethelfrid. But between these two representatives of the two dynasties which divided Northumbria, and succeeded each other in the sovereignty, there was this difference, that the young Edwin had sought and found an asylum among his pagan fellow-countrymen; while the banishment of Oswald led him into intercourse with people of a race and religion differing from his own. Since the apostolate of Columba, the Scots and Picts had become entirely Christian; and among

Oswald, son of the King of Northumbria, an exile with the Scots.

them Oswald and his companions in misfortune learned the truths of Christianity, and were all baptized, but according to the rite of the Celtic Church, which differed from the Roman.[1]

He is baptized according to the Celtic rite.

After the overthrow of Edwin and the Deïrian dynasty, of which he was the head, the princes of the Bernician family returned to Northumbria, from which they had been banished for seventeen years.[2]

The elder, Eanfrid, as has been stated, fell by the sword of the Briton Cadwallon, after having renounced the Christian faith. But his younger brother Oswald was a man of a very different stamp. At the head of a small but resolute band, of whom a dozen at most were Christians like himself, he undertook to reconquer his country, and did not hesitate to carry on the struggle against the immense forces of the formidable Briton, nor even to attack him in pitched battle.

He undertakes to reconquer Northumbria from the British.

The two armies, so unequal in numbers, met near that great wall which the Emperor Severus had erected from sea to sea to keep back the Picts, and which divided Northumbria into two nearly equal parts. This rampart, which had neither restrained the Picts in their invasions of the south, nor the Saxons in their conquests to the north, was then, though not intact, still standing; as indeed even now its vast remains may be traced on the steep hill-tops and uplands, covered with heath, or strewn with basalt rocks, which give to that district of England an aspect so different from that of her ordinary landscapes. Flanked by a fragment of the Roman wall, the Anglo-Saxon prince occupied a height where his feeble forces could defy the attack of the numerous battalions of Cadwallon.[3] On that height, which was

[1] "Filii præfati regis . . . cum magna nobilium juventute apud Scotos sive Pictos exulabant ibique ad doctrinam Scotorum catechizati et baptismatis sunt gratia recreati." — BEDE, iii. 1.

Fleury, Lanigan, and many other historians, have supposed that these expressions of Bede applied to the Irish, who, as we have seen above, bore the name of Scots long before that name had been communicated, by an Irish colony, to the inhabitants of Caledonia. But no valid proof is to be found in ancient authors to confirm this supposition.

[2] To help the reader to find his way through the labyrinth of the two Northumbrian dynasties, the history of which, here begun, will be largely followed up in this volume, we add (see Appendix VI., p. 752) a genealogical table, to which he will do well to make frequent reference.

[3] See for the description of the battle-field a recent publication of the learned society which, under the name of a famous archæologist, Surtees, has for thirty years devoted itself to bringing to light the monuments of Northumbrian history, viz., *The Priory of Hexham*, edited by JAMES RAINE, 1864; vol. i., preface, page xi., and app. ii.

Oswald plants the first cross in Bernicia on the eve of the battle with the British.

afterwards called *Heaven's Field*,[4] and which still bears the name of St. Oswald, on the eve of the day of decisive battle, the young and ardent warrior held erect with his own hands a large wooden cross, which had been hastily made by his orders, while his companions heaped the earth round it, to keep it firm in its position; then prostrating himself before it, he said to his brothers in arms, "Let us all fall on our knees, and together implore the living and true and Almighty God in His mercy to defend us against the pride and fierceness of our enemy; for that God knows our cause is just, and that we fight for the salvation of our nation. Yes, it is for our salvation and our freedom that we must fight to-day against those Britons, whom our fathers gloried in challenging, but who now prophesy the extirpation of our race."[5]

The Britons themselves might seem to have an equal right to offer this prayer, for they had long been Christians, and after all had only retaken their native soil from the grasp of foreign invaders.[6] But a century of possession had given the latter a conviction of their right; and the bloody cruelties of Cadwallon had dishonored his patriotism. Oswald, moreover, represented the cause of advancing Christianity; for the Britons did nothing to convert their enemies, and the cross which he planted was the first which had been as yet seen in Bernicia.

[4] "Vocatur locus ille in lingua Anglorum *Hefenfelth*, quod dici potest latine Cœlestis Campus." — Bede, iii. 1. A chapel dedicated to St. Oswald marks the spot so well described by Bede, near the small town of the same name, a little to the north of Hexham and of the railway from Newcastle to Carlisle. The battle is known by the name of *Denisesburn*, from the brook on the bank of which the British king perished in his flight.

[5] "Fertur quia facta cruce citato opere ac fovea præparata, ipse fide fervens hanc arripuerit ac foveæ imposuerit, atque utraque manu erectam tenuerit, donec, adgesto a militibus pulvere, terræ figeretur. . . . Flectamus omnes genua et Dominum omnipotentem vivum ac verum in commune deprecemur, ut nos ab hoste superbo et feroce sua miseratione defendat; scit enim ipse quia justa pro salute gentis nostræ bella suscepimus." — Bede, iii. 2. The more recent historians throw especial light on the patriotic side of this struggle. "Exprobrandi pudoris rem ventilari allegans, Anglos cum Britannis tam iniquo marte confligere, ut contra illos pro salute decertarent quos ultro *pro gloria* consueverunt lacessere. Itaque pro libertate audentibus animis et viribus effusis decertarent, nihil de fuga meditantes: tali modo et illis provenire gloriam et annuente Deo patriæ libertatem. . . . Cædwallum, virum, ut ipse dictitabat, in exterminium Anglorum natum." — Wilh. Malmesb., i. 44; Ricard. de Cirenc., *Spect. Hist. de Gest. Reg. Angl.*, ii. 36.

[6] A. de la Borderie, *Lutte des Britons Insulaires*, p. 221.

On the evening of the same day, and during the night which preceded the contest which was to fix his destiny, Oswald, asleep in his tent, saw in a dream the holy St. Columba, the apostle and patron of the country of his exile and of the Church in which he had received his baptism. The warlike abbot of Iona, who had been dead for thirty-six years, appeared to him, shining with an angelic beauty; erect, and with that lofty stature that distinguished him in life, he stood and stretched his resplendent robe over the whole of the small army of exiles as if to protect it; then addressing the prince, he said, as God said to Joshua before the passage of the Jordan, "Be of good courage and play the man. At the break of day march to the battle: I have obtained for thee from God the victory over thine enemies and the death of tyrants: thou shalt conquer, and reign." The prince, on awaking, told his vision to the Saxons who had joined him, and all promised to receive baptism, like himself and the twelve companions of his exile, if he should return a conqueror.[7] Early on the morrow the battle began, and Oswald gained a victory as complete as it was unlikely. Cadwallon, the last hero of the British race — victor, according to the Welsh tradition, in forty battles and in sixty single combats — perished in this defeat. The Britons evacuated Northumbria never to return, and withdrew behind the Severn. Those who remained to the north of the Dee, in the territory which has since been divided into the counties of Chester, Lancaster, and Westmoreland, submitted to the Northumbrian sway, which henceforth extended from the Irish Channel to the North Sea, tracing the line of the east coast as far as Edinburgh. There still remained, however, out of Wales and to the south of the Wall of Severus, in the region adjoining Caledonia, a district bathed by

Apparition of St. Columba to Oswald.

Battle of Denisesburn.

Defeat and death of Cadwallon.

[7] "Pridie . . . in suo papilione supra pulvillum dormiens, sanctum Columbam in visu videt forma coruscantem angelica; cujus alta proceritas vertice nubes tangere videbatur . . . suum regi proprium revelans nomen, in medio castrorum stans, excepta quadam parva extremitate, sui protegebat fulgida veste. . . . Confortare et age viriliter, ecce ego tecum: hac sequente nocte de castris ad bellum procede; hac enim vice mihi Dominus donavit ut hostes in fugam vertantur tui. . . . Totus populus promittit se post reversionem de bello crediturum et baptismum susceperum, nam tota illa Saxonia gentilitatis et ignorantiæ tenebris obscurata erat, excepto ipso rege Oswaldo, cum duodecim viris, qui cum eo Scotos inter exulante, baptizati sunt." — ADAMNAN, *Vita S. Columbæ*, v. 1. He obtained this fact from his predecessor at Iona, the Abbot Failbe, who had heard it told by Oswald himself to the fifth abbot of Iona.

the waters of the Solway, full of lakes and hills like Caledonia itself, and then, as now, known by the name of Cumbria or Cumberland, where the Britons continued independent, relying on the support of the Scots, and in alliance with the people of their own race who dwelt on the banks of the Clyde. But they fell, and, though subdued, agreed in bestowing upon the son of the Ravager — the grandson of the Burner — the Saxon who had nobly vanquished them, the name of *Lamn-Gwinn;* which means, according to some, "the Shining Sword," according to others, "the Liberal Hand." [8]

Oswald makes the two Northumbrian Kingdoms into one, which becomes the leading power among the Anglo-Saxons.

635-642.

Nothing is known of the course of events which, after the defeat and death of the great British chief, confirmed Oswald in the undisputed sovereignty of the whole of Northumbria and the temporary supremacy of the entire Saxon Heptarchy; but we find him entitled Emperor of all Britain, by a writer almost contemporary with himself.[9] Not only, says Bede, had he learned to possess in hope the heavenly kingdom which his forefathers knew not; but in this world God gave him a kingdom vaster than that possessed by any of his ancestors. He reigned over the four races who shared Britain among them — the Britons, the Scots, the Picts, and the Angles.[10] No doubt this supremacy was but partially acknowledged, especially beyond the limits of the Anglo-Saxon territory; but Northumbria, when united under one king, could not fail to become at once the chief power of the confederation. Oswald, who was the great-grandson of Ina on his father's side, and grandson of Ella on his mother's,[11] had a natural right to unite the two realms of Deïra and Bernicia, while at the same time delivering them from the humiliating and bloody yoke of the Britons and Mercians. He seems to have had a special affection for Bernicia, his father's country, in which he lived, and whose ancient boundaries on the Caledonian side he extended or re-established. But he succeeded, we are told by the Northumbrian Bede, in reconciling and binding into one state

[8] A de la Borderie, *op. cit.* Lappenberg, p. 157.

[9] Cumineus, half a century prior to Bede, says, in his *Life of Columba*, c. 25 — "Totius Britanniæ imperator a Deo ordinatur."

[10] "Non solum incognita progenitoribus suis regna cœlorum sperare didicit; sed et . . . omnes provincias et nationes Britanniæ, quæ in quatuor linguas, id est Britonum, Pictorum, Scotorum, et Anglorum, divisæ sunt, in ditione accepit." — Bede, iii.

[11] See the genealogical table, Appendix I.

the two tribes which, although of the same race, had lived in continual conflict. He made of the two a real nation.[12]

He is the sixth Bretwalda.

Oswald was the sixth of the great chiefs or suzerains of the confederation who bore the title of *Bretwalda*,[13] before whom was carried the *tufa*, or tuft of feathers, which was the emblem of supreme authority, and which after this was used by none save by the Northumbrian kings. It is supposed that this dignity was conferred or ratified by the suffrage, not only of all the kings of the Heptarchy, but also of the principal chiefs or barons of each tribe. It was at first exclusively military; but it became under Oswald and his successors, as it had already been with Ethelbert of Kent, a means of exercising great influence in religious matters. For Oswald was not only a true king and a gallant soldier, but also a good Christian, destined to become a saint; and in the power with which he found himself invested he saw chiefly the means of defending and propagating the faith which he had received with his baptism from the hands of the sons of Columba.

As soon as Oswald was established on his father's throne, his first and dearest thought was to bring back and to procure the triumph in his own country of that religion which had been the consolation of his exile. For this end missionaries, ministers of the word of God, were necessary above all things. It did not occur to him to seek them in the Church of Canterbury, the monastic centre which already existed on English soil, and whence ten years before had come Paulinus, the first apostle of Northumbria. He does not seem to have even thought of the noble and worthy Roman deacon, James, whom Paulinus, on abandoning his metropolitan see of York, had left alone behind him; and who, re-

Oswald seeks missionaries from the Celtic monasteries.

The deacon James.

[12] "Hujus industria regis, Deirorum et Berniciorum provinciæ, quæ eatenus ab invicem discedebant, in unam sunt pacem et velut unum compaginatæ in populum." — *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 6.

[13] The list of the Bretwaldas as given by Bede (ii. 5) may be quoted here: —

560. Ella, King of the South Saxons.
579. Peawlin, King of the West Saxons.
596. Ethelbert, King of the Jutes of Kent.
616. Redwald, King of the East Angles.
630. Edwin, King of the Northumbrians, or Northern Angles.
635. Oswald, King of the Northumbrians.
642. Oswy, King of the Northumbrians.

To this list Lappenberg thinks should be added the name of Wulphere, King of the Mercians, or Angles of the Middle, from 656 to 675.

maining gallantly at his post during the storm of invasion and havoc, had continued to baptize and preach, and to snatch his prey from the old enemy.[14] This deacon, however, was the lieutenant of a bishop to some extent identified with the Deïrian dynasty, and the family of King Edwin, which had exiled, robbed, and supplanted the family of Oswald, and which he had just supplanted in his turn. Was it for this reason, as has been supposed,[15] that Oswald sought no aid from the Roman missionaries? Is it not more natural to conclude that he was chiefly influenced by his remembrance of the generous hospitality which he had found among the Scots, and of the instructions of those from whom in early manhood he received baptism and the other sacraments of the Church? Be this as it may, it was to the Scotic Church that he addressed himself— that is to say, to the heads of monasteries ruled by the traditions and institutions of Columba, that great abbot of Iona who appeared to him in his dream the night before the decisive battle, to promise him victory and a crown.[16]

Under the influence of that Celtic patriotism which inflamed the Britons against the conquering strangers, and which was no less unwilling to concede to them a share in eternal salvation than in the British soil, the Scotic or Irish Church seems up to this time to have refrained from all effort to spread the Gospel among the Saxons. But the time had come to adopt a different course. As though it had only awaited the signal given by Oswald, the Celtic Church, aided by the brave missionaries who sprang from that monastic reformation of which Iona was the centre, immediately began to light up with its radiance the whole northern region of Saxon Britain, from whence it went on into the territory where it had been preceded by the Roman missionaries, and where the two apostolic agencies finally met.[17]

The Scottish monks replied with heartiness to the appeal of the exile, now a conqueror and sovereign. But the first

[14] "Virum utique industrium ac nobilem in Christo et Ecclesia . . . virum utique ecclesiasticum et sanctum, qui multo ex hinc tempore in ecclesia manens, magnas antiquo hosti prædas, docendo et baptizando, eripuit." — Bede, ii. 16, 20.

[15] Varin. — Faber, *Life of St. Oswald.*

[16] "Mox ubi regnum suscepit, desiderans to tamgentem Christianæ fidei gratia imbui. . . . Misit ad majores natos Scotorum, inter quos exsulans ipse baptismatis sacramenta cum his qui secum erant militibus, consecutus erat, petens, ut cujus doctrina ac ministerio gens quam regebat Anglorum dominicæ fidei et dona disceret et susciperet sacramenta." — Bede, iii. 3.

[17] Varin, Deuxième Mémoire, p. 9.

effort of their zeal was not fortunate. Their first representative seems to have been animated by that spirit of pedantic rigor, by that stubborn and intolerant austerity, which have often shown themselves in the national character of the Scots along with Christian devotion and self-denial, and which culminated in the too celebrated Puritans. This missionary, by name Corman, attempted in vain to preach the Gospel to the Northumbrians, who heard him with opposition and dislike. After some time he returned to Iona; and in rendering an account of his mission to those who had sent him — that is to say, to the elders of the monastery — he declared that he could make nothing of the Angles, that they were a race of untamable savages, and of a stubborn and barbarous spirit. This report greatly disquieted and perplexed the fathers of the synod, who ardently desired to impart to the English people the gift of salvation which had been asked from them.[18] They deliberated for a long time, until at length one of the assembly, Aïdan, a monk of Iona, said to the discomfited preacher, "It seems to me, my brother, that you have been too hard upon these ignorant people: you have not, according to the apostolic counsel, offered them first the milk of gentle doctrine, to bring them by degrees, while nourishing them with the divine Word, to the true understanding and practice of the more advanced precepts." [19] At these words every eye was turned to Aïdan: his opinion was thoughtfully discussed, and the debate ended in an acknowledgment that he was the man wanted for the mission, since he was endowed with that discernment which is the source of all virtues. There was, as we have seen, a bishop in the Monastery of Iona, so that Aïdan was at once consecrated missionary and bishop of Northumbria.[20]

Failure of the first Scottish missionary.

He is succeeded by Aïdan.

He received his mission from the whole brotherhood and from the Abbot of Iona, Seghen, the fourth successor of Co-

[18] "Austerioris animi vir qui cum . . . prædicans nihil proficeretur, nec libenter a populo audiretur . . . in conventu seniorum retulerit, quia nil prodesse docendo genti . . . potuisset, eo quod essent homines, indomabiles, et duræ ac barbaræ mentis. . . . At illi . . . tractatum magnum in concilio quid esset agendum, habere cœperunt, desiderantes quidem genti quam petebant solutem esse, sed de non recepto prædicatore dolentes." — Bede, iii. 5.

[19] "Lac mollioris doctrinæ . . . donec paulatim enutriti verbo Dei, ad capienda perfectiora et ad facienda sublimiora Dei præcepta sufficerent."

[20] "Omnium qui considebant ad ipsum ora et oculi conversi . . . ipsum esse dignum episcopatu, ipsum ad erudiendos incredulos et indoctos mitti debere decernunt, qui gratia discretionis, quæ virtutum mater est, ante omnia probatur imbutus, sicque illum ordinantes, ad prædicandum miserunt."

lumba in the monastic metropolis of the Hebrides, the fourth of these great monks to whom Bede himself, somewhat prejudiced as he was against their holy founder, could not refuse the testimony that they were as illustrious for their self-denial as for their love of God and of strict monastic order. The venerable historian could find but one grievance wherewith to charge them and their delegate Aïdan — viz., their fidelity to Celtic observances as to the celebration of Easter, which the clergy of the south of Ireland had abandoned, to conform to the new usage of Rome,[21] but which the Scots of the north of Ireland and of all Caledonia obstinately preserved as they had received it from their fathers.[22]

Everything had to be done, or done over again, in the once Christian Northumbria. To the south, in Deïra, the ravages of Cadwallon and Penda do not seem to have left any traces of the mission of Paulinus except the solitary church at York, where the deacon James had maintained the celebration of Christian worship, and which, begun by Edwin, was completed by Oswald. In Bernicia we must conclude that the Roman Bishop restricted himself to itinerating missions, followed by those general baptisms of which we have spoken, but that he had not founded there any permanent station, since, until the cross was planted by Oswald on the eve of his victory over the Britons, it is said that no one had ever seen a church or an altar, or any emblem of the Christian faith.[23]

It was thus a hard task, and one well worthy of a follower of Columba, which presented itself to the monk of Iona, trained in the school of that great missionary.[24]

[21] In 630, at the Synod of Leighlin, thanks to the efforts of two monks, Laserian, superior of the 1500 monks of Leighlin, and Cummian, the disciple of Columba, and author of a famous letter, of which we shall presently hear more, in connection with this wearisome discussion. Compare Lanigan, *Ecclesiastical History of Ireland*, vol. ii. chap. 15.

[22] "Qualiscumque fuerit ipse . . . reliquit successores magna continentia ac divino amore regularique institutione insignes. . . . Ab hac ergo insula, ab horum collegio monachorum, ad provinciam Anglorum instituendam in Christo, missus est Ædan, accepto gradu episcopatus." — Bede, iii. 4. 5.

[23] "Nullum Christianæ fidei signum, nulla ecclesia, nullum altare in tota Berniciorum gente erectum est, priusquam hoc sacræ crucis vexillum novus militiæ ductor, dictante fidei devotione, contra hostem immanissimum pugnaturus statueret." — Bede, iii. 2, 11.

[24] That is to say, under his successors, for although Aïdan, ordained bishop in 635, might very well have seen and heard Columba, who died in 597, yet no proof can be found in support of Colgan's assertion, which ranks him, as well as his successors Finan and Colman, among the direct disciples of the great abbot (*Trias Thaumaturga*, pp. 487, 489). He bases this assertion

Aïdan had brought with him several of his brethren, and the number of Celtic monks who came to help him increased from day to day. It became necessary to assign to them, or rather to create for them, a centre of operations. The king left to Aïdan the choice of the seat of his bishopric. Although his diocese comprised the whole of Northumbria, he does not seem to have thought of occupying the vacant see of York. Whether he yielded in this to the prejudices and dislikes which separated the Scots from Roman usages, or whether he was unwilling to quit the northern district, where the mission of Paulinus had left the fewest traces, and where, consequently, he had most work to do, it is certain that he chose to place his episcopal monastery at a distance from the churches founded by the Roman monks in the southern part of the country. He preferred a position a little more central, near the royal residence of Oswald, and on the coast, but much nearer the Firth of Forth than the mouth of the Humber, which mark the two extreme limits of Oswald's kingdom to the north and south.

The monastic capital of Northumbria is fixed in the isle of Lindisfarne.

This choice of a residence shows that, as a monk of Iona, ambitious of following in every respect the example of the great apostle of his race, founder of the sanctuary whence he issued, Aïdan took pleasure in imitating St. Columba even in local particulars. Like him he settled his community in an island near the shore, almost as small, as insignificant, and as barren as Iona was when the holy exile from Ireland landed there. Its position was even in some sort a repetition, in the North Sea, and to the east of Great Britain, of the position of Iona upon the opposite coast, and on the shore of the Atlantic.

Amid the waves of the Northern Sea, opposite the green hills of Northumberland and the sandy beach which extends between the border town of Berwick on the north, and the imposing ruins of the feudal fortress of Bamborough on the south, lies a low island, flat and sombre, girt with basaltic rocks, forming a kind of square block, which terminates to the north-west in a long point of land stretching towards the mouth of the Tweed and Scotland. This Island bears the impress of melancholy and barrenness. It can never

simply on the mention of three persons bearing these names in the biography of Adamnan. Colgan himself deprives this argument of all weight by proving that there are in the Irish calendar 23 saints of the name of Aïdan, and 109 of the name of Colman or Colomban.

have produced anything but the sorriest crops and some meagre pasturage. There is not a tree, not an undulation, not one noticeable feature, save a small conical hill to the south-west, now crowned by a strong castle of picturesque form, but recent construction. In this poor islet was erected the first Christian church of the whole district, now so populous, rich and industrious, which extends from Hull to Edinburgh. This was Lindisfarne — that is to say, the Mother Church, the religious capital of the north of England and south of Scotland, the residence of the first sixteen bishops of Northumbria, the sanctuary and monastic citadel of the whole country round — the Iona of the Anglo-Saxons. The resemblance of Lisdisfarne to Iona, of the colony to the metropolis, the daughter to the mother, is striking. These two isles, once so celebrated, so renowned, so influential over two great and hostile races, have the same sombre and melancholy aspect, full of a wild and savage sadness. Religion only could people, fertilize, and tranquillize these arid and desolate shores.

The island chosen by Aïdan is, however, an island during only a portion of each day. As at Mont St. Michel in France, twice in the twenty-four hours the ebbing tide leaves the sands uncovered, and the passage can be made on foot to the neighboring shore,[25] though not always without danger, for many stories are told of travellers drowned in attempting to cross to the holy isle at low water. From this new abode Aïdan, looking southward, could descry far off the rock and stronghold of Bamborough, where Oswald, after the example of his grandfather Ida, had established his capital. His eye, like his heart, could there hail the young and glorious prince who was his friend, his helper, and his rival.

Nothing is known of the early history of St. Aïdan. When he first appears to us he is already a monk at Iona, and clothed with a certain authority among his brethren. Even when raised to the episcopate, he remained always a monk, not only in heart, but in life. Almost all his Celtic fellow-workers, whether from Ireland or Scotland, were monks like himself, and followed the cenobitical rule of their order and country. A hundred years after Aïdan, the system which he had established at Lindisfarne was still in full vigor; and, as

[25] "Insula hæc, accedente reumate, quotidie his undis spumantibus maris alluitur, totiesque refluis maris sinibus, antiqua terra relinquitur." — Reginaldi Monachi Dunelmensis, *Libellus de Admirandis B. Cuthberti Virtutibus*, c. 12.

in his day, the bishop was either himself the abbot of the insular community, or lived there as a monk, subject, like the other religious, to the authority of the abbot, elected with the consent of the brotherhood. The priests, deacons, choristers, and other officials of the cathedral church, were all monks.[26] But this monastic discipline and order would have availed little if the missionary head of the institution had not possessed the character common to great servants of the truth, and been endowed with those virtues which the apostolical office demands.

Apostolic virtues of the monk-bishop Aïdan.

Bede,[27] who was born twenty years after the death of the monk-bishop, and who lived all his life in the country which was fragrant with the memory of Aïdan's virtues, has made his character and life the subject of one of the most eloquent and attractive pictures ever drawn by the pen of the venerable historian. The praise which he awards to him is not only more expressive and more distinct than that given to any other of the monastic apostles of England, but also so much the less to be suspected of partiality, that it is qualified by the most energetic protests against his Celtic peculiarities. "He was," Bede tells us, "a pontiff inspired with a passionate love of goodness; but at the same time full of a surpassing gentleness and moderation." Faithful to all the noble teachings of his monastic cradle, he appeared to the future clergy of Northumbria as a marvel of self-denial and austerity. He was the first to practise what he taught, and none could ever reproach him with having failed to fulfil, to his best ability, all the precepts of the gospels, of the apostles, or the prophets.

Indifferent to all worldly possessions, Aïdan expended in alms all that he received from the kings and rich men. To the astonishment of the Saxons, who were, like the modern English, excellent horsemen, and valued nothing more highly than the horse, it was always on foot that the bishop went through town and country, penetrating everywhere — now

[26] "Monachi erant maxime qui ad prædicandum venerant. . . . Monachus ipse episcopus Ædan." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 3. "Et monasticum cum suis omnibus vitam semper agere solebat; unde ab illo omnes loci ipsius antistites usque hodie sic episcopale exercent officium, ut regente monasterium abbate quem ipsi cum consilio fratrum elegerint, omnes . . . monasticam per omnia cum ipso episcopo regulam servent." — Bede, *Vit. S. Cuthberti*, c. 16.

[27] It is to Bede we owe all that is known of Aïdan, as of so many other personages of the seventh century. — Compare *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. vi. Augusti, p. 688

among the rich, now among the poor — baptizing those who were still heathen, confirming in the faith those who were already Christians, and stimulating all to alms-giving and good works. All who accompanied him, monks or laymen, had to devote a certain portion of each day to meditation — that is to say, to reading the Bible and learning the Psalter. Unwearied in study, humble and peaceful, charitable and sincere, he was especially distinguished by zeal against the sins of the rich. Far from sparing any of their vices or excesses, he rebuked them with the greatest sharpness: and contrary to the received custom, he never made any present to the chiefs or nobles, restricting himself to simple hospitality when they came to visit him, and giving away to the first beggar whom he met the gifts which they heaped upon him. But the priestly courage which armed him against the pride of the powerful was transformed into tender and watchful solicitude when he had to defend the feeble, to relieve the needy, or to comfort the unfortunate. His, in a word, was the heart of a true priest and apostle, disdainful of all false grandeur and vain prosperity, and victorious over all the mean and perverse tendencies of his time, and of all times.[28]

Aïdan retained nothing for himself of all the gifts of land which the generosity of the Saxon kings and nobles bestowed upon the Church, whose doctrines they had just embraced. He was content with Lindisfarne and the scanty fields of his poor little isle. But he reserved for himself, wherever it was possible in the vast *villæ* of the kings and nobles, a site for a chapel, with a small chamber attached, where he prepared his sermons, and in which he lodged during his incessant and prolonged journeys.[29]

[28] "Scripsi hæc . . . nequaquam in eo laudans vel eligens hoc quod de observantia paschæ minus perfecte sapiebat, immo hoc multum detestans . . . sed quasi verax historicus. . . . Quantum ab eis qui eum novere didicimus, summæ mansuetudinis et pietatis et moderaminis virum. . . . Unde (ab Iona) inter alia vivendi documenta, saluberrimum abstinentiæ et modestiæ clericis exemplum reliquit. . . . Cuncta et urbana et rustica loca, non equorum dorso, sed pedum incessu. . . . Sive adtonsi, seu laici, meditari deberent, id est aut legendis Scripturis aut psalmis discendis operam dare. . . . Nunquam divitibus honoris sive timoris gratia, si qua deliquissent reticebat; sed aspera illos invectione corrigebat. . . . Nullam potentibus seculi pecuniam, excepta solummodo esca si quos hospitio suscepisset, unquam dare solebat. . . . Animum iræ et avaritiæ victorem, superbiæ simul et vanæ gloriæ contemptorem . . . auctoritatem sacerdote dignam, redarguendi superbos ac potentes, pariter et infirmos consolandi, ac pauperes recreandi vel defendendi clementiam." — Bede, iii. 3, 5, 17.

[29] "In hoc habens ecclesiam et cubiculum, sæpe ibidem diverti ac manere, atque inde ad prædicandum circumquaque exire consueverat: quod ipsum

He takes especial care of the young and of slaves.

Like St. Gregory the Great, whom, though not his disciple, he emulated in well doing, he took an especial interest in the education of children and the emancipation of slaves. From the beginning of his mission he attached to himself twelve English youths, whom he educated with the greatest care for the service of Christ, and of whom one at least became a bishop. Every church and monastery founded by him became immediately a school where the children of the English received from Aïdan's monks an education as complete as that to be had in any of the great Irish monasteries.[30] As to slaves, he devoted principally to their redemption the gifts which he owed to the munificence of the Anglo-Saxons, endeavoring especially to save such as, to use Bede's expression, had been "unjustly sold," — which means, probably, those who were not foreign prisoners, or who had not been condemned to slavery as the punishment of crime. For it has been already stated, and it must be kept in mind, that the Saxons, as well as the Celts, made no scruple of selling their brethren and their children like cattle. The freedmen were carefully instructed by Aïdan, numbered among his disciples, and frequently raised to the priesthood.[31] Heathen barbarism was thus assailed and undermined in its very citadel by monks, both from the north and from the south, and by slaves promoted to the rank of priests.

King Oswald helper and interpreter to Bishop Aïdan.

The king and the bishop rivalled each other in virtue, in piety, in ardent charity, and desire for the conversion of souls. Thanks to their mutual and unwearied efforts, every day saw the Christian religion spreading farther and taking deeper root; every day joyous crowds hastened to feed on the bread of the Divine Word, and to plunge into the waters of baptism; every day numerous churches, flanked by monasteries and schools, rose from the soil. Every day new gifts of land, due to the generosity of Oswald and the Northumbrian nobles, came to swell the patrimony of the monks and the poor. Every day, also, new missionaries, full of zeal and fervor, arrived from Ireland or Scotland to help on the work of

et in aliis villis regiis solebat, utpote nil propriæ possessionis, excepta ecclesia sua et adjacentibus agellis, habens." — Bede, iii. 17.

[30] "Imbuebantur præceptoribus Scotis parvuli Anglorum una cum majoribus studiis et observatione disciplinæ regularis." — Bede, iii. 3.

[31] "Ad redemptionem eorum qui injuste fuerant venditi. . . . Multos quos pretio dato redemerat, suos discipulos fecit, atque ad sacerdotalem usque gradum erudiendo atque instituendo provexit." — Bede, iii. 5.

Aïdan and Oswald, preaching and baptizing converts. And at the same time James the Deacon, sole survivor of the former Roman mission, redoubled his efforts to help forward the regeneration of the country in which he had already seen the faith flourish and decay. He took advantage of the restoration of peace, and the increasing number of the faithful, to add, like a true disciple of St. Gregory, the teaching of music to the teaching of religion, and to familiarize the English of the north with the sweet and solemn melody of the Roman chant, as already in use among the Saxons of Canterbury.[32]

Oswald did not content himself with giving his friend Aïdan the obedience of a son and the support of a king, in all that could aid in the extension and consolidation of Christianity. He himself gave a personal example of all the Christian virtues, and often passed whole nights in prayer, still more occupied with the concerns of the heavenly kingdom than with those of the earthly realm which he had so ably won, and for which he was so soon to die. He was not only lavish in alms, giving of his riches, with humble and tender charity, to the humble and the poor, to the sick, to travellers, and to needy strangers who came to the bishop to be nourished with the Word of Life. In addition he constituted himself Aïdan's interpreter; "and it was," says Bede, "a touching spectacle to see the king, who had, during his long exile, thoroughly learned the Celtic tongue, translating to the great chiefs and the principal officials of his court, the eorls and thanes, the sermons of the bishop, who as yet spoke but imperfectly the language of the Anglo-Saxons.[33]

The tender friendship and apostolic brotherhood which thus united the king and the bishop of the Northumbrians

[32] "Exin cœpere plures per dies de Scotorum regione venire. . . . Construebantur ecclesiæ per loca, confluebant ad audiendum verbum populi gaudentes, donabantur munere regio. . . . Qui quoniam cancndi in ecclesia erat peritissimus, recuperata postmodum pace in provincia et crescente numero fidelium, etiam magister ecclesiasticæ cantionis juxta morem Romanorum seu Cantuariorum multis cœpit existere." — Bede, iii. 3, 11, 20.

[33] "Qui temporalis regni gubernacula tenens, magis pro æterno regno semper laborare solebat. . . . Pauperibus et peregrinis semper humilis, benignus et largus. . . . Semper, dum viveret, infirmis et pauperibus consulere, eleemosynas dare, opem ferre non cessabat. . . . Pulcherrimo sæpe spectaculo contigit, ut evangelizante antistite qui Anglorum linguam perfecte non noverat, ipse rex suis ducibus ac ministris interpres verbi extiteret cœlestis, quia tam longo exilii sui tempore linguam Scotorum plene didicerat." — Bede, iii. 12, 9, 6, 3.

has, perhaps more than anything else, contributed to exalt and hallow their memory in the annals of Catholic England.

Oswald was too active, too popular, too energetic, and too powerful not to make his actions and influence felt beyond the bounds of his own kingdom. Like Edwin, whom he resembles in so many points, notwithstanding the rivalry of their two families, he turned his thoughts and his steps to the south of the Humber. Edwin had converted, for a time at least, his neighbors and vassals, the East Anglians. Oswald went further, and contributed largely to the conversion of the most powerful kingdom of the Heptarchy, next to Northumbria — that of the Saxons of the West, Wessex — a kingdom which was destined to absorb and supplant all the others. The kings of this nation also professed to be of the blood of Odin; they were descended from a chief called Cerdic, perhaps the bravest of all the invaders of the British soil, and who had consolidated his conquests by forty years of craft and war. It was among this warlike race that Oswald sought a wife; but, contrary to ordinary precedent, it was, in this new union, the husband, and not the wife, who took the initiative in conversion. When he went for his bride, Kineburga, into the country of the West Saxons, the King of Northumbria met there an Italian bishop, who had undertaken their conversion, finding them entirely pagan. He did his best to second the laborious efforts of the foreign missionary, and the king, whose daughter he was about to wed, having consented to be baptized, Oswald stood sponsor for him, and thus became the spiritual father of him whose son-in-law he was about to become.[34] He took back to Northumbria with him the young convert, who soon bore him a son, little worthy of his sire, but yet destined at least to be the founder of a monastery which acted a part of some importance in the history of his people.

Oswald marries the daughter of the King of Wessex, and converts his father-in-law.

All this prosperity was soon to end, as all that is good and beautiful ends here below. The terrible Penda was still alive, and, under the iron hand of that redoubtable warrior, Mercia remained the stronghold of paganism, even as Northumbria had become under Edwin and Oswald the centre of Christian life in Great Britain. He had left unrevenged the death of his

Invasion of Penda at the head of the Mercians and Britons.

[34] "Cum omnes paganissimos inveniret. . . . Pulcherrimo et Deo digno consortio, cujus erat filiam accepturus in conjugem, ipsum prius secunda generatione Deo dictatum sibi accepit in filium." — Bede, iii. 7.

ally, the Briton Cadwallon; he had done nothing to hinder the accession and establishment of a new Christian king in Northumbria. But when that king essayed to cross the river which formed the boundary of the two kingdoms, and to unite to his domains a province which had always belonged to the Mercians,[35] Penda, notwithstanding his age, resumed his old inveteracy towards those whom he saw — again like Edwin — deserting the worship of their common ancestor Odin, and claiming an insupportable supremacy over all the Saxons, Pagan or Christian. He accordingly renewed with the Britons the alliance which had already been so disastrous to the Northumbrians, and, placing himself at the head of the two combined armies, waged for two years a sanguinary war against Oswald, which ended in a decisive battle at Maserfeld, on the western border of Mercia and Northumbria.[36] The struggle was fierce; the brother of Penda perished in the fight, but Oswald, the great and beloved Oswald, shared the same fate. He died on the field, in the flower of his years, at the age of thirty-eight. There he fell — the historian of the English Church says with emphasis — fighting for his country. But his last word, his last thought, was for heaven, and for the eternal welfare of his people. "My God," said he, on seeing himself encircled with enemies, overwhelmed by numbers, and already pierced by a forest of arrows and lances — "my God, save their souls."[37] The last cry of this saintly spirit, this young hero, remained long graven on the memory of the Saxon people, and passed into a proverb to denote those who prayed without ceasing in life and in death.

Battle of Maserfeld. 5th August, 642. Oswald is slain.

The ferocity of Penda was not even satisfied by the death of his young rival. When the dead body of the king of Northumbria was brought from the battle-field into his pres-

[35] Oswald, whether as a conqueror or only as bretwalda or chief of the confederation, had invaded that province of Lindsey, where Paulinus had founded the Cathedral of Lincoln, where the monks themselves reproached the sainted King of Northumbria, forty years after his death, with having wished to rule over them.

[36] According to some, near Winwick, in Lancashire; according to others, at Oswestry, in Shrewsbury.

[37] "Ubi pro patria dimicans a paganis interfectus est. . . . Vulgatum est autem et in consuetudinem proverbii versum quod etiam inter orationes vitam finierit. . . . Cum armis et hostibus circumseptus, jamjam videret se esse perimendum, oravit pro animabus exercitus sui. Unde dicunt in proverbio: *Deus, miserere animabus, dixit Oswald cadens in terra.*" — Bede, iii. 9, 12. "Cum stipatoribus fusis ipse quoque ferratam silvam in pectore gereret." — Wilhelm. Malmesb., *De Gest.*, lib. i. c. 3.

ence, the old savage caused the head and hands of the hero to be cut off, and set up on stakes, to intimidate both conquerors and conquered. The noble remains were thus exposed for a whole year, till his brother and avenger, Oswy, carried them away. The hero's head was then taken to Lindisfarne, to the great monastery which he had so richly endowed, and where his holy friend Aïdan awaited it; but his hands were deposited in a chapel in the royal fortress of Bamborough, the cradle of that Northumbrian dominion which the arms of his ancestors had founded, and which his own had so valiantly restored.

Thus perished, at the age of thirty-eight, Oswald, ranked by the Church among her martyrs, and by the Anglo-Saxon people among its saints and heroes of most enduring fame. Through the obscurity of that thankless and confused age, the eye rests gratefully on this young prince, reared in exile among the hereditary enemies of his race, who was consoled for the loss of a throne by his conversion to Christianity: who regained the kingdom of his fathers at the point of the sword, and planted the first cross on his native soil, at the moment when he freed it from the usurper; crowned by the love and devotion of the people on whom he bestowed the blessings of peace and of supreme truth, spending his very life for its sake; united for a few short years to a wife whom, in marrying, he had made a Christian; gentle and strong, serious and sincere, pious and intelligent, humble and bold, active and gracious, a soldier and a missionary, a king and a martyr, slain in the flower of his age on the field of battle, fighting for his country and praying for his subjects. Where shall we find in all history a hero more nearly approaching the ideal, more richly gifted, more worthy of eternal remembrance, and, it must be added, more completely forgotten?

Oswald is venerated as a martyr.

It was long, however, before his name was forgotten. During the whole Anglo-Saxon period, and even after the Norman Conquest, under the Plantagenets, this gallant soldier, great king, and generous Christian, continued to be the object of popular veneration. The chroniclers and poets of the time vied with each other in celebrating his fame. "Who, then," said one of them, with that mingling of classic associations and Christian ideas so habitual to the monks and all the writers of the middle ages —"Who, then, is Hercules? who is Alexander the Great? who is Julius Cæsar? We are taught that Hercules conquered himself, Alexander conquered the world, and Cæsar

the enemies of Rome; but Oswald conquered at once the world, his enemies, and himself."[38]

The monks of the great and magnificent Church of Hexham went in procession every year to celebrate the day consecrated to him at the site of the cross which he had planted on the eve of his first victory. But the love and gratitude of the Christian people gave a still greater glory to the place of his defeat and death. Pilgrims came thither in crowds to seek relief from their sufferings, and had each a miraculous cure to relate on their return. The dust which his noble blood had watered was collected with care and conveyed to great distances as a remedy for disease, or a preservative from the evils of life. By dint of carrying away this dust a hollow was scooped out of a man's size, and which seemed the ever-open tomb of this martyr of his country. On seeing the turf around this hollow clothed with an unwonted verdure, more delicate and beautiful than elsewhere, travellers said that the man who had perished there must needs have been more holy and more pleasing in God's sight than all the other warriors who rested beneath that sward.[39] The veneration of which his remains were the object spread not only among all the Saxons and Britons of Great Britain, but even beyond the seas, in Ireland, and among the Greeks and the Germans. The very stake on which the head of the royal martyr had been fixed was cut up into relics, the fragments of which were regarded as of sovereign efficacy in the healing both of body or of mind. These things provoke a pitying smile from the wise and witty, who in times and countries enslaved by the ascendency of numbers and physical force are not forbidden to philosophize. But no safer or sweeter asylum has ever been found for humiliated patriotism, violated justice, or vanquished freedom, than the pious tenderness with which Christian nations once surrounded the tomb and relics of those who died for the faith and their rights.

[38] "Quis fuit Alcides? Quis Cæsar Julius? Aut quis
Magnus Alexander? Alcides se superasse
Fertur; Alexander mundum, sed Julius hostem.
Se simul Oswaldus et mundum vicit et hostem."
— Ap. Camden, *Britannia*, iii. 493.

[39] "Contigit ut pulverem ipsum ubi corpus ejus in terram corruit . . . multi auferentes . . . qui mox adeo increbuit, ut paulatim ablata exinde terra fossam ad mensuram staturæ virilis reddiderit. Quidam de natione Britonum, iter faciens juxta ipsum locum, vidit unius loci spatium cetero campo venustius ac viridius: cœpitque sagaci animo conficere quod nulla esset alia causa insolitæ illo in loco viriditatis, nisi quia ibidem sanctior cetero exercitu vir aliquis fuisset interfectus." — Bede, iii. 9, 10.

A kind of prophecy, that Oswald's bones would become relics, had been made to him by Aïdan, on the following occasion : —

Prediction of Aïdan in regard to Oswald's hand.

The bishop had made it a rule to accept very rarely those invitations to the royal table which were considered, among the Germanic races, as signs of the most marked distinction. When he did go he was present only at the beginning of the repast, after which he would hasten away to apply himself, with his monks, to reading or prayer. But one Easter-day the monk-bishop, being at dinner with the king, and seated beside him, had just raised his hand to bless a silver dish filled with delicacies which was placed before Oswald, when the officer to whom the charge of the poor was specially intrusted, suddenly entered to announce that there was a crowd of beggars in the street who besought alms of the king. Oswald immediately gave orders that the food, and the silver dish which contained it, the latter broken in pieces, should be divided among the beggars. As he stretched out his hand to give this order, the bishop seized it and cried, "May this hand never perish!"[40] The following year it was severed from his body, and picked up on the battle-field where he gave his life for God and his people; and the hand of the royal martyr, enshrined in the sanctury of the ancient Northumbrian capital, continued entire and incorruptible for centuries, was seen and kissed by innumerable Christians, and disappeared only in that abyss of spoliation and sacrilege in which Henry VIII. ingulfed all the monastic glories and treasures of England.

[40] "Adceleravit ocius ad legendum aut orandum egredi. . . . Discus argenteus regalibus epulis refertus, jamjam essent manus ad benedicendum panem missuri. . . . Ministrum cui suscipiendorum inopum erat cura delegata. . . . Pontifex qui adsidebat . . . apprehendit dextram ejus et ait: *Nunquam inveterascat hæc manus.*" — Bede, iii. 5, 6. The Bollandists prove (vol. ii. Aug., p. 87) that the hand still existed in the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER II.

NORTHUMBRIA UNDER THE SUCCESSORS OF OSWALD — THE CELTIC BISHOPS — THE GREAT ABBESSES, HILDA AND EBBA.

Oswald's successors in Northumbria: Oswy in Bernicia; Oswin in Deïra. — Oswin's intimacy with Bishop Aïdan. — The son of the mare and the son of God. — New outrages of Penda. — Aïdan stops the burning of Bamborough. — Struggle between Oswy and Oswin. — Murder of Oswin. — Death of Aïdan twelve years after his friend. — The double monastery of Tynemouth, built above the tomb of Oswin. — The wife of the murderer dedicates a monastery to the expiation of the murder. — Reign of Oswy, who was venerated as a saint, notwithstanding his crime, because of his zeal for the truth. — Successors of Aïdan at Lindisfarne, sent by the monks of Iona. — Episcopate of the Scot Finan. — He builds the Cathedral of Lindisfarne of wood. — Colman, second successor. — Novitiate at Melrose. — The young Anglo-Saxons go to study in Ireland. — The female monasteries of Northumbria. — Heïa, the first nun. — Hartlepool. — Aïdan gives the veil to Hilda, princess of Deïra: her rule of thirty years at Whitby. — Description of the place. — The six bishops who issued from the double monastery. Ceadmon, the cowherd, vassal of Hilda; the first Anglo-Saxon poet; precursor of Milton, he sings the Paradise Lost; his holy life and death. — The Princess Ebba, of the rival dynasty, sister of Oswald and Oswy, foundress and Abbess of Coldingham: she also rules for thirty years. — Notable disorders in her monasteries. — Fervor and austerity of the Northumbrian monks: extraordinary fasts: different characteristics of Lindisfarne, Coldingham, and Melrose. — A precursor of Dante. — Foundation of Lastingham: Cedd, monk of Lindisfarne. — Testimony borne by the Romano-Benedictine Bede to the virtue, disinterestedness, and popularity of the Celtic missionaries. — Nevertheless, resistance and opposition are not awanting. — Contrast and fickleness of character in the kings as in the people. — Joy of the natives of the coast on seeing the monks shipwrecked.

Oswald's successors in Northumbria.

On the death of Oswald Northumbria fell a prey, first to the ravages of Mercian invasion, then to the complications and weakness of a divided succession. Like the Merovingian, and even the Carlovingian Franks, although with a less fatal obstinacy, the Anglo-Saxons, and particularly the Angles of Northumbria, could not resist the inclination which led them to accept or to incite the division of a kingdom among several princes as soon as there appeared

several heirs of a deceased king. It must be supposed that these divisions answered in England, as in France, to certain distinctions of race, or to certain exigencies of local or provincial self-government, which could not be reconciled with the existence of one supreme authority. Oswald left a son in childhood, whose claims were not at that moment taken into consideration. His brother Oswy, still in the flower of his youth, and, though much less saintly than Oswald, no less a good soldier and valiant captain, at once took his place in Bernicia — that is to say, in the northern part of Northumbria. As for Deïra, it fell to a prince of the Deïrian dynasty, grand-nephew to Ella, the founder of that race,[41] and son of that ill-fated Osric who had reigned for a year only over Southern Northumbria after the downfall of his cousin Edwin in 633 — a short reign, which left him scarce time enough to renounce the baptism which he had received from the hands of Paulinus, and to perish under the sword of Cadwallon's Britons. His son, called Oswin, had been saved while yet a child by his friends, who sent him out of Northumbria, and had passed his youth in exile, like Edwin, and the two brothers Oswald and Oswy. Exile seems to have been the necessary and salutary apprenticeship of the Northumbrian kings.

Oswy in Bernicia.

Oswin, king in Deïra. 642-51.

On hearing of the death of Oswald he claimed his right of succession. The old subjects of his father and grand-uncle gladly received him.[42] The principal nobles met in assembly, acknowledged his hereditary right, and proclaimed him King of the Deïrians; and for seven years he governed them to the satisfaction of all. He was still very young, of lofty stature, endowed with remarkable comeliness and grace — a matter of no small importance in an age and among a people extremely sensible to external advantages. But he had, in addition, all the virtues which were then regarded as proofs of sanctity. His extreme gentleness, his charity, and, above all, his humility, were universally extolled. He was, moreover, so accessible, so courteous and generous, that the noblest

[41] See the genealogical table, Appendix VI., p. 752.

[42] "Audiens Oswinus exulans, quod, Oswaldo defuncto, regnaret Oswin pro fratre suo, inito cum suis consilio ad regnum Deïrorum regressus, ab omni plebe lætante recepitur. . . . Omnibus ejus beneficia postulantibus hilariter impendebat." — Joan. Tynemouth, ap. Bolland., t. iv. Aug., p. 63. "Parvo temporis intervallo principes primatesque regni convenerunt in unum communicatoque unanimiter consilio B. Oswinum hæredi tatis juris successorem Deïrorum dominum in regem sublimantes." — *Vita Oswini*, p. 3, *in the Publications of the Surtees Society*, 1838.

lords of all Northumbria vied with each other in seeking the honor of serving among those officers of his household whom the Latin historians designate in England, as elsewhere, by the name of *ministeriales*.[43]

His connection with Aïdan

Although Oswin had been exiled among the Saxons of Wessex, and not in Scotland, like his cousins and rivals Oswald and Oswy, and had been thus entirely out of contact with the Celtic monks, he was already a Christian when he returned to Northumbria, and did not hesitate to recognize the episcopal authority of Aïdan. During his whole reign the monk of Iona, now bishop of Lindisfarne, continued to travel throughout the two kingdoms which formed his immense diocese — not confining himself to preaching in the new churches, but going from house to house to foster beside the domestic hearth the seeds of the new-sown faith.[44] It was a special pleasure to him on such occasions to rest under the hospitable roof of the young king of Deïra, with whom he always lived in as tender and thorough a union as that which had united him to Oswald.

The son of the mare and the son of God.

An oft-repeated anecdote, which reveals at once the pleasant intimacy of their relations and the noble delicacy of their minds, has been left us by Bede. Aïdan, as we have said, performed all his apostolic journeys on foot, but it was the king's wish that he should have at least a horse to cross the rivers, or for other special emergencies; he gave him accordingly his best steed, splendidly caparisoned. The bishop accepted it, and made use of it; but being, as Bede calls him, "the father and worshipper of the poor," it happened ere long that, meeting a man who asked alms, he leaped down from his royal courser, and gave it, harnessed as it was, to the beggar. The king, being informed of this, said to Aïdan, as they were going to dinner together, "Lord bishop, what do you mean by giving my horse to that beggar? Had I not many other horses of less value, and property of every kind to give in alms, without the necessity of giving that horse that I had expressly chosen for your own special use?" "What is this you say?" re-

[43] "In maxima omnium rerum affluentia et ipse amabilis omnibus præfuit. . . . Aspectu venustus et statura sublimis et affatu jucundus et moribus civilis et manu omnibus nobilibus et ignobilibus largus. . . . Unde contigit ut . . . undique ad ejus ministerium de cunctis prope provinciis viri etiam nobilissimi concurrent." — Bede, iii. 14.

[44] "Propter nascentis fidei teneritudinem provinciam circumeundo fidelium domos intrare verbique divini semina pro captu singulorum in agro cordis eorum cominus spargere." — *Vit. Osw.*, p. 4.

plied Aïdan. "O king, the horse, which is the son of a mare, is it dearer to you than the man who is the son of God?" As he said this they entered the banqueting hall. Oswin, who had just returned from the chase, approached the fire with his officers, before sitting down at the table, and while he warmed himself, thought over the words of the bishop; then all at once taking off his sword, he threw himself at the feet of the saint, and implored his pardon. "No more," said he, "shall I speak of it, and never more shall regret anything of mine that you give to the children of God." After which, reassured by the kind words of the bishop, he sat down joyously to dine. But the bishop, on the contrary, became very sad, and began to weep. One of his priests inquired the cause of his sadness; upon which he replied in the Celtic tongue, which neither Oswin nor his attendants understood, "I know now that the king will not live long; never until now have I seen a king so humble; and this nation is not worthy of such a prince."[45]

This little tale, Ozanam truly says, forms a perfect picture; it discloses in those barbarous times a sweetness of sentiment, a delicacy of conscience, a refinement of manners, which, more than knowledge, is the sign of Christian civilization.

The sad foreboding of the saint was realized only too soon. But it was not, like his predecessors, under the assault of the fierce Penda and the coalition of Mercians and Britons that the amiable and conscientious Oswin was to perish. Penda, however, had resumed his devastating career, and continued for thirteen years longer to ravage Northumbria. But he seems to have entertained less unfriendly feelings to his neighbors the Deïrians and their king, than to the Bernicians, and Oswy the brother of his last victim. It is in the north of the two kingdoms that we again find him carrying

[45] "Desiliens ille præcepit equum ita ut erat stratus regaliter, pauperi dare: erat enim . . . cultor pauperum ac velut pater miserorum. . . . Quid voluisti, Domine Antistes, equum regium quem te conveniebat habere, pauperi dare? Numquid non habuimus equos viliores plurimos . . . qui ad pauperum dona sufficerent? . . Quid loqueris, rex? Num tibi carior est ille filius equæ, quam ille filius Dei. . . . Porro rex (venerat enim de venatu) cœpit consistens ad focum calefieri cum ministris, et repente inter calefaciendum recordans verbum quod dixerat illi Antistes, discinxit se gladio suo . . . festinusque accedens ante pedes episcopi corruit. . . . Quia nunquam deinceps aliquid loquar de hoc, aut judicabo quid et quantum de pecunia nostra filiis Dei tribuas. . . . Lingua sua patria quam rex et domestici ejus non noverant. . . . Nunquam ante hoc vidi tam humilem regem." — Bede, iii. 14.

everywhere fire and sword,[46] and attempting to give to the flames the royal fortress of Bamborough. There also we find Aïdan, the benefactor and protector of the country. Penda, not having been able to reduce the fortress either by assault or by investment, caused an enormous pile to be erected all round the rampart. He heaped on it all the wood of the surrounding forests, the driftwood from the beach, the beams, and even the thatch of the cottages in all the neighboring villages which he had destroyed; then, as soon as the wind blew from the west, he set fire to the mass, with the hope of seeing the flames reach the town. Aïdan was at the time in the islet of Farne, an isolated rock in the open sea, a little to the south of Lindisfarne, and nearly opposite Bamborough, to which he often went, quitting his episcopal monastery to devote himself in solitude and silence to prayer. While he prayed he saw a cloud of black smoke and jets of flame covering the sky above the town where his dear Oswald once dwelt. Lifting his eyes and hands to heaven, he cried, with tears, "My God, behold all the evil that Penda does us!" At the same moment the wind changed, the flames whirled round upon the besiegers, destroying many of them, and they speedily abandoned the siege of a place so evidently under Divine protection.[47]

Aïdan saves the capital of Northumbria from being burnt by Penda.

As if this formidable and pitiless enemy was not enough to desolate Northumbria, there arose in the heart of Oswy a jealous animosity which soon ripened into civil war. After seven years of union between the two kings of Bernicia and Deïra, occasions of estrangement, ever increasing, began to arise between them. These were owing, it cannot be doubted, to the preference which, we have already remarked, was shown by so many of the Northumbrian lords for the pleasant and cordial service of King Oswin. Oswy marched against the Deïrians. Oswin likewise put himself at the head of his army; but it was much less numerous than that of the king of Bernicia, and when the moment of battle arrived, he said to the chiefs and lords of his country that he was reluctant to make them risk their lives for him whom they had raised from the position

Struggle between Oswy and Oswin.

[46] "Cum cuncta quæ poterat ferro flammaque perderet." — Bede, iii. 17.

[47] "Plurimam congeriem trabium, tignorum, parietum, virgarum et tecti fenei et his urbem in magna altitudine circumdedit . . . ventis ferentibus globos ignis ac fumum, . . . *Vide, Domine, quanta mala facit Penda.*" — Bede, iii. 16.

of a poor exile to be their king, and who now did not shrink either from renewed exile or death itself.[48] He then disbanded his troops and sought refuge with an earl on whom he thought he could rely, having just conferred on him, after many other bounties, the very manor of Gilling where he reckoned on finding an asylum. This wretched traitor gave him up to Oswy, who had the cruelty to kill him. One companion, Tondhere by name, alone remained to him. Oswin, resigned to his own death, besought that his friend might be spared; but he refused to survive his prince, preferring to sacrifice himself to that sentiment of passionate devotion which, among the Saxons, had preceded Christianity, and which justifies the title of knight prematurely applied to this brave and loyal adherent by one of the martyr's biographers.[49]

Oswin is put to death. 20th Aug., 651.

The king and his knight thus perished together; and twelve days afterwards the glorious Bishop Aïdan followed the king he loved to the tomb.[50] He fell sick during one of his innumerable missionary expeditions, and died under a tent which had been pitched in haste to shelter him at the back of a modest church which he had just built. He expired with his head resting against one of the buttresses of the church. It was a death which became a soldier of the faith upon his own fit field of battle.[51]

Aïdan dies twelve days later.

The body of Aïdan was carried to his monastic cathedral of Lindisfarne. But that of his royal friend, Oswin, was deposited in a chapel dedicated to the blessed Virgin, and situated on a granite headland almost entirely surrounded by the sea, at the mouth of the Tyne, a river which was then the boundary line between the two Northumbrian states of Deïra and Bernicia, and which is now one of the principal arteries of the maritime commerce of England. Ere long, over the sacred remains of this martyr, who was beloved and honored by the Northumbrians of both kingdoms as their father and lord on earth, and their patron saint in heaven, there rose

The double monastery of Tynemouth, founded on Oswin's tomb.

[48] Joann. Tynemouth., l. c.

[49] "Maluit miles morti succumbere quam mortuo domino, etiamsi copia daretur, supervivere." — *Ibid.* Compare Bede, l. c.

[50] "Non plus quam duodecimo post occisionem regis quem amabat die." — *Ibid.*

[51] "Tetenderunt ægrotanti tentorium, ita ut tentorium parieti adhæreret ecclesiæ. Adclinis destinæ quæ extrinsecus ecclesiæ pro munimine erat adposita."

one of those double monasteries which included both monks and nuns within two separate enclosures, but under one government.[52] The nuns whose office it was to pray upon his tomb came from Whitby, which was already governed with a splendor as great as her authority was absolute, by the Abbess Hilda, herself sprung, like the martyred Oswin, from the Deïrian dynasty and the race of Ella. The vicissitudes of this great monastery throughout the invasions of the Danes and Normans; the constant or ever-reviving veneration with which the remains of St. Oswin were regarded, even after the remembrance of his friend Aïdan was totally effaced;[53] the protection which the poor, the afflicted, and oppressed long found under the shadow of his sanctuary, and under the shelter of what was called the *Peace of St. Oswin*, will possibly be related in the sequel of our narrative, or by other and more competent pens. We must content ourselves at present with merely pointing out the beautiful remains of the conventual church which was rebuilt in the thirteenth century, and which is enclosed within the fortress which defends the entrance of the Tyne. The seven great arcades, whose time-worn relics rise majestically against the sky from the height of their rock, produce a vivid effect on the traveller who arrives by sea, and nobly announce England's adoration of the ruins she had made.[54]

Some years later, on the very spot where Oswin had perished, at Gilling, near Richmond, a monastery was reared in expiation of so foul a crime, by the wife of his murderer. This was no other than Eanfleda, daughter of King Edwin, she whose birth had contributed to the conversion of her father,[55] who had been the first-born of Christ in the Northumbrian kingdom, and who, after the overthrow of Edwin and the Roman mission in Northumbria, had been carried in her cradle by Bishop Paulinus into the country

Eanfleda, daughter of King Edwin, and wife of Oswy, consecrates a monastery in expiation of her husband's crime.

[52] "Ut dominum et patrem in terris, defensorem reputarent in cœlis: unde processu temporis ad majorem martyris gloriam sanctimoniales virgines de cœnobio S. Hildæ abbatissæ ad corpus ejus introductæ, usque ad persecutionem Danicam . . . in supremo religionis culmine permanserunt." — MATH. WESTM., ad ann. 1065. Compare BOLLAND., t. iv. Aug., pp. 58, 59.

[53] "De sancto rege Oswino nonnulla dudum audieram, sed sancti Aydani episcopi nec nomen ad me pervenerat," says a traveller, miraculously cured in the twelfth century. — *Vita Oswini*, p. 32.

[54] There is a large and handsome recent work on the Monastery of Tynemouth, entitled, *History of the Monastery founded at Tynemouth in the Diocese of Durham, to the honor of God, under the invocation of the B. V. M. and St. Oswin, King and Martyr, by* WILLIAM SIDNEY GIBSON. London, 1846, 2 vols. 4to.

[55] See p. 210.

of her mother, Ethelburga, daughter of the first Christian king of Kent.

Oswy, who was as able as he was ambitious, readily perceived that it was not enough to murder a rival in order to secure himself in the exclusive sovereignty of Northumbria. He had previously wished to conciliate the opposing dynasty by a matrimonial alliance, as his father Ethelfrid had done.[56] In pursuance of this purpose, he had despatched to Canterbury, with Aïdan's approval and blessing, a priest respected for the gravity and sincerity of his character,[57] and abbot of one of the new monasteries,[58] to obtain from Queen Ethelburga, if she still lived, the hand of her daughter. His suit was granted, and the exiled princess returned to reign over the kingdom that she had quitted in her blood-stained cradle. In this double Northumbrian dynasty, the history of which is at once so dramatic and romantic, and so closely interwoven with the history of the conversion of the English, exile was almost always the forerunner of the kingly office, or of sainthood. Eanfleda, cousin-german of the murdered king, and wife of the king who killed him, obtained permission from her husband to build a monastery on the spot where the murder had been committed, that prayers might be offered there forever for two souls, that of the victim and that of the murderer. The government of this new foundation was intrusted to Trumhere, himself a scion of the family of Deïrian princes, and one of those Anglo-Saxons who, like the negotiator of Eanfleda's marriage, had been trained and raised to the priesthood by the Celtic monks.[59]

Abbot Trumhere.

Upon this noble daughter of Edwin, restored from exile to reign over the country of her ancestors as the wife of the cruel Oswy, the mind rests with emotion. A natural desire arises to attribute to her influence the happy change which appears to have been wrought in the character of Oswy from the day on which she induced him to expiate the crime with which he was stained,

Reign of Oswy. 642-670.

[56] See the genealogical table of the two races in Appendix VI., p. 752.

[57] "Utta, multæ gravitatis vir et ob id omnibus, etiam principibus seculi honorabilis." — Bede, iii. 15.

[58] At Gateshead on the Tyne, opposite Newcastle. Compare Smith's notes on Bede, iii. 21. There was still at Gateshead, in 1745, a Catholic chapel, which was burnt by the populace out of hatred to Prince Charles Edward. — Camden's *Britannia*, Gough's edition, vol. iii. p. 123.

[59] "De natione quidam Anglorum, sed edoctus et ordinatus a Scotis . . . propinquus et ipse erat regis occisi: in quo monasterio assiduæ orationes pro utriusque regis, id est, et occisi, et ejus qui occidere jussit, salute æterna fierent." — Bede, iii. 24.

by founding this monastery. Forgetful of this crime, all the historians unite in extolling the virtues and exploits which distinguished the after portion of his prolonged and active reign. He did not continue at first, after the assassination of Oswin, the undisputed master of all Northumbria; he had to give up at least a part of Deïra to the young son of his brother Oswald, Ethelwald by name. But he retained, notwithstanding, an evident preponderance, not only in Northumbria, but in all England, the dignity of *Bretwalda* having fallen to him uncontested. The great event of his reign is the overthrow of the fierce heathen, Penda of Mercia, an event which sealed the final victory of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons. But both before and after this culminating point of his prosperity, Oswy displayed so ardent and consistent a zeal for the extension and establishment of the Christian religion, that he was finally admitted to a place, sometimes too easily accessible, in the English martyrology.[60]

Aïdan's successors at Lindisfarne, sent by the monks of Iona.

Nevertheless, neither the zeal of Oswy, nor the purer ardor of his illustrious predecessor, could have prevailed against the various and formidable obstacles which the Gospel had to encounter among the Anglo-Saxons, had they not been directed, enlightened, and sustained by the admirable clergy whom Aïdan and his successors had trained in the cloisters of Lindisfarne and its dependent monasteries.

In regard to the succession of bishops in the new diocese of Lindisfarne, it is necessary to keep in mind the very significant difference between the usages followed by the Roman and those of the Celtic missionaries in the election of bishops. The first four successors of Augustine at Canterbury were all, as we have seen, chosen from among the Italian monks who had accompanied him to England: but they all belonged to that first mission, and were all freely chosen by their companions, old or new, in place of being successively sent from Rome, as the bishops of Lindisfarne were from Iona. In fact, at each vacancy in the see of Lindisfarne, the monks of Iona, who regarded that monastic cathedral, and perhaps the whole of christianized Northumbria, as their exclusive property, hastened to despatch a monk of their community to replace him who had rendered his soul to God. The Scottish monks, thus placed during thirty years

[60] 15th February: Compare *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. ii. Feb., p. 801.

at the head of the Church of the North of England, showed themselves thoroughly worthy of the saintly school whence they issued, and of the glorious mission to which they were consecrated. But it is, nevertheless, important to note that, either owing distance or some other cause, Rome left to her missionary communities, her apostolic colonies, a liberty which was not possible under the harsh discipline of the Celtic Church.

The first monk sent from Iona to replace the noble Aïdan, is known by the name of St. Finan.[61] His episcopate was prosperous; it lasted ten years,[62] and was not interrupted by any melancholy event, such as those which had troubled the life of Aïdan by taking from him his two royal friends. Finan always lived on good terms with King Oswy, and before going to join his predecessor in heaven, he had the happiness of introducing to the Church the heads of the two great Saxon kingdoms, who came to seek baptism at the gates of Lindisfarne. In that island-sanctuary, where we must remember that the bishop was often in ecclesiastical subjection to the local abbot of the monastic community, Finan caused a cathedral to be built, not of stone, like that which Paulinus and Edwin had commenced at York, but according to the Celtic custom, and like the churches built by Columba and his Irish monks: it was made entirely of wood and covered with rushes, or rather with that long rough sea-grass, whose pivot-like roots bind together the sands on the sea-shore, and which is still found in great abundance on the island, as well as on the sandy beach which has to be crossed before the traveller can reach Lindisfarne.[63]

Episcopate of the Scot Finan. 651-661.

He builds of wood the Cathedral of Lindisfarne.

[61] "Et ipse illo ab Hii Scotorum insula ac monasterio destinatus." — BEDE, iii. 25. Cf. *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. iii. Feb., p. 21.

[62] The Breviary of Aberdeen, quoted by the Bollandists, affirms that Finan's promotion to the episcopate was preceded by a kind of election or postulation proceeding from the clergy and people of Northumbria, the nuns included: "Congregatis cleri populique concionibus, virorum et mulierum utriusque sexus, unanimiter S. Finanum in episcopum Lindisfarnensem Spiritus Sancti gratia eligi instanter postulaverunt et solemniter assumpserunt." But besides the fact of our finding no trace of any similar election in these ancient monuments, it appears to us incompatible with the formal testimony of the almost contemporary Northumbrian Bede: "Interea Aidano de hac vita sublato, Finan pro illo gradum episcopatus, a Scotis ordinatus ac missus, acceperat." — BEDE, iii. 25.

[63] "Fecit ecclesiam episcopali sede congruam: quam tamen more Scotorum, non de lapide, sed de robore secto totam composuit atque arundine texit." This herb is called in English *bent*, and the sandy flats which it covers, and which extend along all the coast of Northumbria and of southern Scotland, take the name of *links*.

Vast as was his diocese, which embraced the two great Northumbrian kingdoms, and great as must have been his influence over the other Saxon provinces, Finan seems farther to have preserved and exercised an authority not less complete over the country of his origin, the kingdom of the Dalriadian Scots. The Scots annalists all speak of a certain King Fergus, who, by his violence and exactions, had raised the indignation of the Scottish clergy, and called down upon himself a sentence of excommunication from the bishops of Lindisfarne, Finan and his successors.[64] These Celtic bishops were at all times far from courtly. Finan left among the Anglo-Saxons the reputation of a man rough and intractable,[65] and we shall see that his successor was no less difficult than himself.

Colman, second successor of Aïdan. 661-664.

He was succeeded by Colman, a monk of Iona, sent forth by that community, like Aïdan and Finan, to govern the Northumbrian Church,[66] and to evangelize the Northern Anglo-Saxons. He is believed to have been born in Ireland, and on this account he is held in honor there. It has even been supposed that in him might be recognized one of those young disciples of Columba, whose rustic labors the great Abbot blessed and encouraged from the threshold of the cell in which he pursued his solitary studies.[67] True or false, this tradition accords with history, which shows us in Colman a pontiff penetrated with the same spirit as his predecessors, and always worthy of the monastic sanctuary which, for more than a century, was rendered illustrious by the genius and memory of Columba.

Novitiate of Melrose.

Lindisfarne, as may easily be supposed, did not suffice for the training, or indeed for the shelter of the army of monks employed by the Celtic bishops in the spiritual conquest of Northumbria. To the north of the Tweed, the present boundary between England and Scotland, and about half-way from Lindisfarne to the Scots frontier,

[64] Boece and Leslie, ap. Bolland., l. c.

[65] "Quod esset homo ferocis animi." — Bede, l. c.

[66] "Et ipse missus a Scotis. . . . Venit ad insulam Hii unde erat ad prædicandum verbum Anglorum genti destinatus." — Bede, iii. 23: iv. 4.

[67] Adamnan, ii. 16. It is very difficult, however, to admit the identity of the *Colman* of whom Adamnan speaks with Colman the bishop of Lindisfarne: supposing he had been but twenty years of age at the date of Columba's death in 597, he would have been above eighty at the time of his promotion to the episcopate in 661, and would have been nearly one hundred when he died in 675. Comp. Lanigan, op. cit. vol. iii. pp. 59–61.

they established a kind of branch or establishment for novices, where the monks destined for the labors and trials of the apostolate were received and trained. Some of these, like their bishops, came from Iona, Ireland, and the land of the Scots, while others were taken from the ranks of the Saxon converts.[68] This outpost of Lindisfarne and Iona bore the name of *Melrose* — not the Cistercian Melrose, with the name of which Walter Scott has made us familiar, while its picturesque ruins attract all the visitors of the famous quadrilateral formed by the four most beautiful ruins in Scotland, Kelso, Jedburgh, Dryburgh, and Melrose — but a more ancient and more holy Melrose — whose memory has been too much effaced by its brilliant offspring. It was situated on a kind of rounded promontory almost completely encircled by the winding current of the Tweed, the banks of which at this part of its course are very abrupt and thickly wooded. The spot was one of profound solitude, as the very name indicates (*Mail-ross* or *Mul-ross*, desolate point);[69] and here was raised a sanctuary, which was for many years the centre of light and life to all the surrounding country, long frequented by pilgrims, whose paths are still pointed out, and from whence issued many of the saints most venerated in the south of Scotland and north of England.[70]

The young Anglo-Saxons in the Irish monasteries.

The first Abbot of Melrose was Eata, one of the twelve young Saxons whom the first Celtic bishop chose for himself as the first-fruits of his episcopate.[71] But neither the zeal of the pastors nor the fervor of the converts was satisfied with those fountains of life and knowledge which gushed forth in Northumbrian soil. Older and more abundant springs were necessary to them. A crowd of youths, some the sons of thanes or nobles, others of the lowest rank, left their country

[68] VARIN, second paper.

[69] The site is still called *Old Melrose*. It is occupied by a pretty country-house, which belonged in July, 1862, to a Mr. Fairholme. It is not more than three miles from the magnificent ruins of the celebrated Cistercian abbey of the same name, the richest and most powerful of all the Scottish abbeys, and which still contained one hundred monks in 1542, when it was destroyed by the Reformers. — MORTON'S *Monastic Annals of Teviotdale;* Edin. 1832, folio. WADE'S *History of St. Mary's Abbey, Melrose*, 1861, Edin.

[70] Boisil, first prior of Melrose, whose name is preserved in the neighboring village of *Newtown St. Boswell's;* Eata, first abbot of Melrose, then bishop of Lindisfarne; and especially the celebrated and popular Cuthbert, of whom more anon.

[71] See preceding chapter, p. 239.

to cross the sea and visit the distant island which was the cradle of their bishops and missionaries — not the monastic isle of Iona, but the great island of Ireland, where Columba and most of his disciples were born. Of these young Anglo-Saxons, some, inflamed with the love of study or of penance, at once enrolled themselves in the crowded ranks of those great Irish communities where the monks were counted by hundreds and even by thousands; others travelled from monastery to monastery, from cell to cell, seeking the masters who suited them best, and giving themselves up under these masters to the delight of *reading* — that is to say, of study, without binding themselves by any other obligation. All were received with magnificent hospitality by the Scots of Ireland, who freely lavished on them not only food and clothing but books and instruction.[72] All the students who remained in Ireland, as well as those who returned to England, continued to retain a natural prepossession in favor of the ancient insular rites, and to be imbued with that peculiar spirit which so long characterized the Christianity of the Celtic races.

Thus began, under the most honorable conditions, and motives as pure as they were generous, the first historical relations between England and Ireland — between the two races, Saxon and Celtic, who were destined by an unhappy mystery to tear one another in pieces even before religion divided them; one of whom, repaying these early benefits by the blackest ingratitude, has long tarnished the lustre of her glory by the perverse stubbornness of her despotism.

The convents of Northumbria.

While so many young Northumbrians, as yet scarcely escaped from the darkness of idolatry, were thus rushing towards the very heights of ascetic life, or plunging with passionate enthusiasm into the studious and learned career of which Ireland was the great centre, and the Celtic cloisters the principal home, their sisters found asylums where peace and freedom were guaranteed to those whom the service of God and the vows of Christian virginity drew into them. Thanks to the solicitude of the missionary bishops of the line of Columba, the dignity, authority, and moral power which universal report from Tacitus downward agrees in according to the Germanic woman, assumes in the cloister a new, more durable, and universal form, without, however, lessening the duty and right which

[72] See the text of Bede (iii. 27) already quoted, p. 126.

she was acknowledged to possess of occasional intervention in the gravest concerns and most solemn deliberations of the commonwealth.

The principal monasteries destined to afford a home and stronghold to the noble daughters of the conquering Saxons were established on the coast of Northumbria, where already Bamborough and Lindisfarne, the military and the religious capitals of the country, were planted, as if the waves of that sea which their warlike ancestors had crossed, and which flowed direct from the coasts of Germany to beat upon the shores of the conquered island, were to be their safeguard against the dangers of the future. The first of these monasteries was built on the borders of Deïra and Bernicia, on a wooded promontory where the deer then found a covert, and which has since become, under the name of Hartlepool, one of the most frequented ports on the coast.[73] It was founded by a Northumbrian, Heïa by name, the first woman of her race who embraced conventual life, and who received the veil and religious consecration from the hands of Bishop Aïdan.[74] The life of a community, and especially the functions of superior, soon, however, became fatiguing to Heïa, who betook herself to a solitary retreat in the interior of the country. Aïdan replaced her by a descendant of Odin and of Ella, a princess of the blood-royal and of the Deïrian dynasty. This was Hilda, grand-niece of Edwin, the first Christian king of Northumbria, and father of the queen who shared the throne and the bed of Oswy.

Hartlepool. About 645.

Aïdan gives the veil to the first Northumbrian nun, then to the Princess Hilda. 649.

This illustrious lady seemed to be called by her genius and character even more than her rank to exercise a great and legitimate authority over her compatriots. Born in exile, during the sovereignty of Ethelfrid, among the Saxons of the West, where her mother died a violent death, she had returned with her father on the restoration of his race in 617. In her early youth she had been baptized, with her

[73] "Heruteu, id est, insula cervi." — Bede, iii. 24. *Hert* or *hart*, stag; *eu*, isle. We shall take leave throughout to use the modern names of towns and monasteries instead of the Saxon names, which divers erudite modern writers have tried to reintroduce. We shall then say Whitby and not *Streaneshalch*. Hartlepool and not *Heruteu*, Hexham and not *Halgulstadt*.

[74] "Quæ prima feminarum fertur in provincia Nordanhymbrorum propositum vestemque sanctimonialis habitus, consecrante Ædano episcopo, suscepisse." — Bede, iv. 23. It will be seen farther on whether it is possible to adopt the common opinion which confounds this first Northumbrian nun with St. Bega (*St. Bees*), the Irish princess, who is mentioned at another place.

uncle King Edwin, by the Roman missionary Paulinus, which did not, however, prevent her from leaning during her whole life to the side of the Celtic missionaries. Before consecrating her virginity to God, she had lived thirty-three years *very nobly*, says Bede, among her family and her fellow-citizens. When she understood that God called her, she desired to make to Him a complete sacrifice, and forsook at once the world, her family, and her country.[75] She went into East Anglia, the king of which had married her sister, and whence she designed to cross over to France, in order to take the veil either at Chelles, where her widowed sister was one day to devote herself to God,[76] or in some of the monasteries on the shores of the Marne, which sprang from the great Irish colony of Luxeuil, and whither the Saxon virgins already began to resort.[77] She spent a whole year in preparations for her final exile, but she was not permitted to carry it out. Bishop Aïdan authoritatively recalled her to her own country, and settled her there, obtaining for her a small estate sufficient to support a single family, and situated on the banks of the Wear, a little river which has now become, like the Tyne, one of the greatest arteries of English shipping.

Hilda, Abbess of Hartlepool. 649.

There she lived as a nun with a very few companions until Aïdan summoned her to replace the foundress of the Monastery of Hartlepool, where she was invested with the government of a large community.[78]

[75] "Desiderans exinde, si quo modo posset, derelicta patria et omnibus quæcunque habuerat, in Galliam pervenire. . . . Quo facilius perpetuam in cœlis patriam posset mereri." — Bede, iv. 23.

[76] Bede seems to imply that Hereswintha, Queen of East Anglia, was already a nun at Chelles, when Hilda wished to take the veil there; which would be an impossibility, as Hilda became Abbess of Hartlepool before Aïdan's death in 651, and her sister could scarcely take the vows before the death of her husband, King Anna, slain in 654. It is then to the close of Hilda's cloister life that Bede's words must apply: "In eodem monasterio soror ipsius Hereswid . . . regularibus subdita disciplinis ipso tempore coronam exspectabat æternam." — Cf. Thomas Eliensis, ap. Wharton, *Anglia Sacra*, t. i. p. 595. Besides, the Monastery of Chelles, which a vague tradition refers to St. Clotilda, was actually founded by the Saxon Bathilda, and she became Queen of Neustria only on her marriage with Clovis II. in 649. Some uncertainty, farther, rests on this Heriswida. Pagi (*Critic. in Baronium ad an.* 680) maintains that she became a nun in 647 — seven years before her husband's death. Various English historians give her for husband, not Anna, but one of the brothers of that prince, Ethelher or Edric.

[77] See vol i. p. 614.

[78] The original monastery of Hartlepool, destroyed in the ninth century, like all others on the Northumbrian coast, by the Danes, was not restored, but replaced later by a convent of Franciscans. An ancient church, dedicated to St Hilda, still exists, near which excavations carried on betwee

Nine years later, when the peace and freedom of Northumbria had been secured by the final victory gained by King Oswy over the Mercians, Hilda took advantage of a gift of land sufficient for ten families, which that prince had granted her, to establish a new monastery at Streaneshalch, now Whitby, a little to the south of her ancient abbey, and on the same coast. Then foundress of Whitby. 658.

Of all the sites chosen by monastic architects, after that of Monte Cassino I know none grander and more picturesque than that of Whitby. It is even, in certain aspects, still more imposing than the Benedictine capital, as being near the sea. The Esk, which flows through a hilly country, unlike the ordinary levels of England, forms at its mouth a circular bay, commanded on every side by lofty cliffs. On the summit of one of these rocks, 300 feet above the sea, Hilda placed her monastery, on a platform of green and short seaside turf, the sides of which slope abruptly to the northern ocean. From this spot the eye wanders now over the uplands, valleys, and vast heaths of this part of Yorkshire, now along the rough precipices which line the coast, now on the wide horizon of the sea, whose foaming waves break against the perpendicular sides of the great rocky wall which is crowned by the monastery. The dull roar of the tide accords with the sombre tints of the rocks, which are rent and hollowed out by its force; for it is not here, as on the shores of the channel, where the whiteness of the cliffs has gained the name of Albion for the island of Great Britain. The precipices of the Yorkshire coast are, on the contrary, as dark in color as they are abrupt and rugged in outline.[79] Nothing now remains of the Saxon monastery: but more than half of the abbey church, restored by the Percies in the time of the Normans, still stands, and enables the marvelling spectator to form to himself an idea of the solemn grandeur

1833 and 1843 brought to light several Anglo-Saxon tombs, with the emblems and names of women — *Hildithryth*, *Hildigyth*, *Canngyth*, *Berchtgyd*, *Bregusvid* — which seem to have been those of nuns of the Anglo-Saxon community. The last of these names is that of the mother of Hilda, and several of the others are found in the correspondence of St. Boniface with the Saxon nuns. This discovery has given rise to an interesting work, without date or author's name, entitled *Notes on the History of St. Begu and St. Hild*. Hartlepool.

[79] Not so the rocks which border the inner bay formed by the embouchure of the Esk. They are of a brilliant white, and these bright cliffs in the midst of the great black rocks of the coast explain why the Danes, after having destroyed the monastery of Hilda, gave the name of Whitby (*Whiteby*, white dwelling) to the establishment they created there.

of the great edifice. The choir and the north transept are still complete, and offer one of the most beautiful models of English architecture. The two façades of the east and north each with three rows of three-pointed windows, are of unrivalled elegance and purity. The beautiful color of the stone, half worn away by the sea-winds, adds to the charm of these ruins. A more picturesque effect could not be imagined than that of the distant horizon of the azure sea, viewed through the great hollow eyes of the ruinous arches. These majestic relics are now preserved with the respect habitually shown by the English to the monuments of the past; but they cannot always withstand the destroying action of time and the elements. The great central tower fell in 1830. Let the intelligent traveller lose no time, therefore, in visiting one of the oldest and most beautifully situated ruins in Europe, and let him there accord a prayer, or at least a remembrance, to the noble daughter of the Northumbrian kings, who of old erected on this desert rock a pharos of light and peace for the souls of men, by the side of the lighthouse designed to guide the mariners on that stormy sea![80]

The original name, Streaneshalch, signified *The Isle of the Beacon*, and it was probably by this service conferred on the people of the coast that Hilda inaugurated her reign on this promontory, for it was a true reign, temporal as well as spiritual. At Whitby, as at Hartlepool, and during the thirty years that she passed at the head of her two houses, she displayed a rare capacity for the government of souls, and for the consolidation of monastic institutions. This special aptitude, joined to her love of monastic regularity, and her zeal for knowledge and ecclesiastical discipline, gave her an important part to play, and great influence. Her society was sought by Bishop Aïdan, and all the religious who knew her, that they might learn those secrets of divine love and natural wisdom which dwelt

Her reign of thirty years.

[80] The principal details of this monastic church, which is of the beautiful order known as the *Early English*, are perfectly rendered in the magnificent folio published by Edmund Sharpe, an architect, and entitled *Architectural Parallels selected from Abbey Churches*, London, 1848, 121 plates. It was 300 feet long by 70 broad. It is marked by one curious peculiarity; it describes a curve, slightly bending towards the south, so that the door in the western façade is not in an exact line with the central window of the choir. These ruins are now part of a farm belonging to Sir Richard Cholmondeley. The town of Whitby, situated at the foot of these ruins, on the Esk, is a very flourishing seaport, and much frequented by bathers.

in her. The kings even, and princes of her blood, or of the adjacent provinces, often came to consult her, asking enlightenment which they afterwards joyfully acknowledged themselves to have received. But she did not reserve for the great ones of the earth the treasures of her judgment and charity. She scattered around her everywhere the benefits of justice, piety, peace, and temperance. She was ere long regarded and honored as the mother of her country, and all who addressed her gave her the sweet name of mother, which she so well deserved. Not only in Northumbria, but in distant regions, to which the fame of her virtue and enlightenment had penetrated, she was to many the instrument of their salvation and conversion.[81] And in her two communities especially she secured, during a rule of more than thirty years, the supremacy of order, union, charity, and equality, so much, that it became usual to say to the proud Northumbrians, that the image of the primitive Church, wherein was neither rich nor poor, and where all was common among the Christians, was realized at Whitby.

But the most touching particular of all in the enthusiastic narrative of the venerable Bede, is that which proves the passionate tenderness felt for her by her daughters, especially by the young virgins whom she prepared for religious life in a separate house, by the discipline of a novitiate establishment regularly constituted and attentively superintended.[82]

Nor did the royal abbess confine herself to the government of a numerous community of nuns. According to a usage then very general, but principally prevailing in Celtic countries, a monastery was joined to the nunnery. And Hilda inspired the monks subject to her authority with so great a devotion to their rule, so true a love of sacred literature, and so careful a study of the Scriptures, that this mon-

[81] "Quam omnes qui noverant, ob insigne pietatis et gratiæ Matrem vocare consueverant . . . nam et episcopus Aidan et quique noverant eam religiosi pro insita et sapientia et amore divini famulatus, sedulo eam visitare . . . solebant. . . . Regularis vitæ institutioni multum intenta. . . . Tantæ autem erat ipsa prudentiæ, ut non solum mediocres in necessitatibus suis, sed etiam reges ac principes nonnunquam ab ea quærerent consilium et invenirent. . . . Quam omnes qui noverant, ob insigne pietatis et gratiæ Matrem vocare consueverant. . . . Etiam plurimis longe manentibus ad quos felix industriæ ac virtutis ejus rumor pervenit, occasionem salutis et correctionis ministravit."

[82] "Cuidam virginum . . . quæ illam immenso amore diligebat. . . . In extremis monasterii locis seorsum posita ubi nuper venientes ad conversionem feminæ solebant probari, donec regulariter institutæ in societatem congregationis susciperentur."

astery, ruled by a woman, became a true school of missionaries, and even of bishops.[83] Many ecclesiastical dignitaries, as remarkable for their virtue as for their learning, were sent forth by it;[84] one of whom in particular, St. John of Beverly, attained a degree of popularity rare even in England, where the saints were of old so universally and so readily popular.

The cowherd Ceadmon, a vassal of Hilda, the first Anglo-Saxon poet.

But neither the kings nor princes who consulted the great abbess on her sea girt promontory, nor the bishops, nor even the saints nurtured in her school, occupy in the annals of the human mind, or in the learned researches of our contemporaries, a place comparable to that held by an old cowherd who lived on the lands belonging to Hilda's community, and whose memory is inseparably connected with hers. It is on the lips of this cowherd that the Anglo-Saxon speech first bursts into poetry, and nothing in the whole history of European literature is more original or more religious than this first utterance of the English muse. His name was Ceadmon. He had already reached an advanced age, having spent his life in his humble occupation, without even learning music, or being able to join in the joyous choruses which held such a high place at the feasts and social gatherings of all classes, both poor and rich, among the Anglo-Saxons as among the Celts. When it was his turn to sing at any of these festal meetings, and the harp was handed to him, his custom was to rise from table and go home. One evening, when he had thus withdrawn from his friends, he went back to his humble shed and went to sleep by the side of his cattle. During his slumber he heard a voice, which called him by name, and said to him, "Sing me something;" to which he replied, "I cannot sing, and that is why I have left the supper and come here." "Sing, notwithstanding," said the voice. "But what, then, shall I sing?" "Sing the beginning of the world; the creation." Immediately on receiving this command, he began to sing verses, of which before he had no knowledge, but which celbrated the glory and power of the Creator, the eternal God, worker of all marvels, father of the human race, who had given to the sons of men the heavens for their roof, and the

[83] "Tantum lectioni divinarum Scripturarum suos vacare subditos . . . faciebat, ut facillime viderentur ibidem qui ecclesiasticum gradum, hoc est, altaris officium apte subirent, plurimi posse reperiri." — Bede, iv. 23.

[84] Bede names six with the highest eulogies — "Quinque episcopos omnes singularis meriti ac sanctitatis viros. . . . Vir strenuissimus et doctissimus, atque excellentis ingenii vocabulo Tatfrid, de ejusdem abbatissæ monasterio electus."

earth for their dwelling-place. On awaking, he recollected all that he had sung in his dream, and hastened to tell all that had happened to him to the farmer in whose service he was.[85]

The Abbess Hilda, when the story was repeated to her, called for Ceadmon and questioned him in the presence of all the learned men whom she could assemble around her. He was made to relate his vision and repeat his songs, and then different passages of sacred history and various points of doctrine were explained to him, that he might put them into verse. The next morning he was again called, and immediately began to recite all that had been told him, in verses which were pronounced to be excellent. He was thus discovered all at once to possess the gift of improvisation in his mother tongue. Hilda and her learned assessors did not hesitate to recognize in this a special gift of God worthy of all respect and of the most tender care. She received Ceadmon and his whole family within the monastic community of Whitby, and afterwards admitted him to the number of monks who were under her rule, and made him carefully translate the whole Bible into Anglo-Saxon. As soon, accordingly, as the sacred history and the gospel were narrated to him, he made himself master of the tale, ruminated it, as Bede said, as a clean animal ruminates its food, and transformed it into songs so beautiful that all who listened to him were delighed.[86] He thus put into verse the whole of Genesis and Exodus, with other portions of the Old Testament, and afterwards the life and passion of our Lord and the Acts of the Apostles.

His talent and his poetic faculty thus went on day by day to fuller development, and he devoted numerous songs to such subjects as were best calculated to induce his companions to forsake evil and love and practise the good: the terrors of the last judgment, the pains of hell, the joys of paradise, the action of Divine Providence in the world — all these great and momentous subjects were in their turn woven

[85] "Nonnunquam in convivio cum esset lætitiæ causa decretum ut omnes per ordinem cantare deberent, ille ubi abpropinquare sibi citharam cernebat, surgebat a media cœna. . . . Dum relicta domo convivii egressus esset, ab stabula jumentorum . . . ibique membra dedisset sopori. Cædmon, canta mihi aliquid . . . at ille: Nescio cantare. . . . Canta principium creaturarum." — Bede, iv. 24.

[86] "Ipse cuncta, quæ audiendo discere poterat, rememorando secum et quasi mundum animal ruminando in carmen dulcissimum convertebat; suaviusque resonando doctores suos vicissim auditores suos faciebat."

into his verse. The fragments that remain enable us to estimate the earnest and impassioned inspiration, strongly Christian and profoundly original, which characterized these first efforts of genius, barbarous, but subdued and baptized.

The precursor of Milton.

The Northumbrian cowherd, transformed into a monk of Whitby, sang before the abbess Hilda the revolt of Satan and Paradise Lost a thousand years earlier than Milton, in verses which may still be admired even beside the immortal poem of the British Homer.[87] Notwithstanding Bede's assertion that poetry cannot be translated from one language to another without losing its honor and dignity, we shall borrow from the nervous pen of one of our contemporaries a translation which conveys a just idea of the sombre and wild genius of this truly biblical poet.[88] "Why," says Satan, speaking of God, "should I implore His favor, or bow myself before Him with obedience? I can be a god like Him. Up with me, brave companions who will not fail me in the struggle? brave-hearted warriors who have chosen me for your chief! illustrious soldiers! With such warriors, in truth, one can choose a side; with such combatants one can seize a post. They are my zealous friends, faithful in the warmth of their hearts. I can, as their chief, govern in this kingdom; I have no need to flatter any one; I will be His subject no more!"

He is vanquished, and hurled into the city of exile — into the abode of groans and hatred — into the hideous eternal night, the darkness of which is broken by smoke and crimson flames. "Is this," he says, "the narrow spot in which my master shuts me up? How different from the dwellings that we know on high in the kingdom of heaven! Oh! if I had the free power of my hands, and if I could issue forth for once, for one winter only, I and my army! But bands of iron

[87] This fragment of Cædmon's poem on the revolt of Satan, discovered by Archbishop Usher, and printed for the first time in 1655, has been preserved, and frequently published since that date. It has been republished with learned annotations by Dr. Bouterweck, *De Cedmone poeta Anglo-Saxonum vetustissimo brevis Dissertatio*, at Elberfeld, 1845. Sir F. Palgrave, one of the most competent critics of English history and literature, justly remarks that there are in this fragment passages so like the *Paradise Lost* that some of Milton's lines read like an almost literal translation. There was an interval of a thousand years between them, Ceadmon dying about 680, and Milton in 1674. Compare Sharon Turner's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, l. iv. c. 3.

[88] "Neque enim possunt carmina, quamvis optime composita, ex alia in aliam linguam ad verbum sine detrimento sui decoris ac dignitatis transferri."

surround me — chains bind me down helpless. I am without a kingdom. The fetters of hell shackle me so firmly, clasp me so tightly! Here are huge flames; above and below I have never seen so horrible a place. The fire never languishes — its heat ascends above hell. The rings that encircle me, the manacles that gnaw my flesh, keep me from advancing, and close the way before me; my feet are tied, my hands imprisoned. Thus has God shut me in." Since nothing can be done against Him, it is against His own creature, man, that the enemy must turn. To him who has lost all, revenge is still left; and in securing that, the vanquished may yet be happy and rest placidly even under the weight of the chains with which he is laden.[89]

His holy life.

It would, however, be a totally mistaken idea to recognize in the Abbess Hilda's dependant nothing but a poet or literary pioneer; he was above all a primitive Christian, a true monk, and, in one word, a saint.[90] His mind was mild and humble, simple and pure; he served God with tranquil devotion, grateful for the extraordinary grace that he had received from heaven. But he was so full of zeal for monastic regularity that he opposed with great vehemence the transgressors of the rule — an error for which he seems to have felt some compunctions at the very point of death. No frivolous or worldly subjects ever inspired his verse; he composed his songs only that they might be useful to the soul, and their solemn beauty did even more for the conversion than for the delight of his countrymen. Many were moved by them to despise this world, and to turn with ardent love to the divine life. Many Englishmen after him, says Bede, have tried to compose religious poems; but no one has ever equalled the man who had only God for his master.[91]

[89] This translation is borrowed from *L'Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, by M. Taine. The author of that work, in which so much talent is mixed up with so many lamentable errors, says very justly of Ceadmon: "Thus is true poetry born. . . . It does but repeat, over and over, one passionate burden. These are the songs of the ancient servants of Odin, now tonsured and wrapt in a monk's frock. Their poetry remains unchanged. They think of God, as of Odin, in a succession of images, brief, crowded, impassioned, like successive flashes of lightning. The Satan of Milton exists in that of Ceadmon as a picture exists in a sketch, for both derive their picture from the race, and Ceadmon has found his materials in the warriors of the North, as Milton in the Puritans."

[90] The Bollandists have devoted a special article to him (vol. ii. Feb., p. 552), *De S. Cedmono, cantore theodidacto;* but they make no material addition to what we learn from Bede.

[91] "Erat vir multum religiosus et regularibus disciplinis humiliter subditus. . . . Quadam divina gratia specialiter insignis. . . . Quicquid ex

His gentle death. About 680.

He died as poets seldom die. At the very beginning of his illness he desired his bed to be made in that part of the infirmary which was assigned to the dying, and while smiling and talking cheerfully with his brethren, asked for the *viaticum*. At the moment when he was about to administer the communion to himself, according to the usage of the period, and while holding in his hands the holy eucharist, he asked all those who were round him if any one had any grudge against him, or any complaint to make. All answered, No. Then said he, "I too, my children, have a mind at peace with all God's servants." A little after he had made his communion, as they were about to awaken the monks for matins, he made the sign of the cross, laid his head on the pillow, and fell asleep in silence, to awake no more.[92]

Apart from the interest which attaches to Ceadmon from a historical and literary point of view, his life discloses to us essential peculiarities in the outward organization and intellectual life of those great communities which in the seventh century studded the coast of Northumbria, and which, with all their numerous dependants, found often a more complete development under the crosier of such a woman as Hilda than under superiors of the other sex. It is apparent that admission to the benefits of monastic protection and shelter was not confined to isolated monks, but was extended to whole families.[93] And the example of Hilda also discloses how earnest was the desire of the superiors of monasteries to instruct the ignorant masses, and to familiarize them, by instruction in the vulgar tongue, or by poetic paraphrases, with Holy Scripture and Christian doctrine.

divinis litteris per interpretes disceret hoc ipse post pusillum. . . . Verbis poeticis maxima suavitate et compunctione compositis in sua, id est, Anglorum, lingua proferret. . . . Alii post illum in gente Anglorum religiosa poemata facere tentabant, sed ei nullus æquiparari potuit: non ab hominibus . . . sed divinitus adjutus gratis canendi donum accepit. . . . Unde nihil unquam frivoli et supervacui poematis facere potuit; sed ea tantummodo quæ ad religionem pertinent. . . . Simplici ac pura mente tranquillaque devotione Domino serviebat." — Bede, l. c.

[92] "In proxima casa, in qua infirmiores et qui prope morituri esse videbantur, induci solebant. . . . Cum ibidem positus vicissim aliquo gaudente animo, una cum eis qui ibidem ante inerant, loqueretur et jocaretur. . . . *Et tamen*, ait, *afferte mihi eucharistiam*. Qua accepta in manu, interrogavit si omnes placidum erga se animum et sine querela controversiæ ac rancoris haberent. . . . Sicque se cœlesti muniens viatico . . . reclinavit caput ad cervical, modicumque obdormiens, ita cum silentio vitam finivit."

[93] "Susceptum in monasterium cum omnibus suis fratrum cohorti adsociavit." — Bede, l. c.

Ebba, princess of Bernicia, becomes Abbess of Coldingham.

Whitby, with its lighthouse and its great monastery, was the most southerly place of refuge on that Northumbrian coast, still so formidable to sailors, which at that time was lined with so many sanctuaries. At the northern extremity of the same coast, beyond Lindisfarne, on what is now the frontier of Scotland, at Coldingham, rose also, as at Whitby, two monasteries — the one for men and the other for women — both founded and governed by one abbess. While Hilda, the Deïrian princess, ruled her monasteries on the shores of her father's kingdom, Ebba, a princess of the rival dynasty, granddaughter of Ida the Burner, daughter of Ethelfrid the Ravager, but sister of the sainted King Oswald, and of Oswy the reigning king, formed on the sea-coast of Bernicia another manastic centre, which was yet to hold an important position, and to work out a stormy history. It had been the intention of her brother to give her in marriage to the king of Scots — a union meant undoubtedly to strengthen or to re-establish the alliance of the restored family of Ethelfrid with the Scottish dynasty which had offered the exiles such generous hospitality during the reign of Edwin, the chief of the race by which they had been exiled. Ebba, however, was obstinately opposed to this marriage. Her family had all embraced, during their banishment, the principles of the Christian faith, and it was now her desire to advance to the practice of the counsels of the Gospel. It was not from the hands of Aïdan, but from those of Finan, his successor at Lindisfarne, that she received the veil:[94] Oswy left her at liberty to devote herself to God, and gave her a piece of land on the banks of the Derwent where she might found her first monastery, which received the name of Ebba's Castle.[95] But the principal scene of her activities was Coldingham, in a situation which she seems to have chosen in emulation of that of Whitby. Her great and famous monastery was built, not on the spot now called by her name,[96] but on the summit of an isolated promontory which still bears the title of St. Abb's Head, or Cape, and which abruptly terminates the range of the Lammermoors, thrusting itself out into the German Ocean. From this headland, or rather precipice, which rises perpen-

[94] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. v. August, p. 197.

[95] Ebbæ-Castrum, whence Ebbchester, a village in the county of Durham.

[96] It owes this name to a priory founded by a colony of monks from Durham in 1098, and very richly endowed by the kings of Scotland.

dicularly for more than 500 feet from the level of the sea, the view embraces, on the north, the Scotch coast to the farther side of the Forth, and, on the south, the English coast as far as the holy isle of Lindisfarne and the royal acropolis of Bamborough. A small ruined chapel is all that remains to mark the site of the great sanctuary of Ebba, who was, like Hilda, placed at the head of a double community of men and of women, and presided over the religious life of northern Northumbria with no less success, and for an equal length of time, taking her part, also during nearly thirty years, with no less authority in the affairs of her country.[97]

She also reigns for thirty years 650-683.

She did not always succeed, however, in maintaining amongst her daughters the fervor and the regularity of which she herself gave an example. That relaxation of discipline from which, by a mysterious and terrible judgment of God, the religious orders have never been able to preserve themselves, and which was destined to invade so speedily the Anglo-Saxon cloisters, made its way into Coldingham even during the lifetime of the foundress. She was warned of this by a holy priest of her community who had come from Ireland with the other Celtic missionaries, and who was called Adamnan, like the historian and successor of Columba at Iona As he went with the abbess through the vast and lofty buildings which she had erected upon her promontory, he said to her with tears, "All that you see here, so beautiful and so grand, will soon be laid in ashes." And as the astonished princess exclaimed against his prophecy, "Yes," continued he; "I have seen in my vigils an unknown one who has revealed to me all the evil that is done in this house, and the punishment that is prepared for it. He has told me that he has visited each cell and each bed, and that everywhere he has found the monks and the nuns either wrapt in a shameful sleep, or awake to do evil. These cells, intended for prayer or for study, are made use of sometimes for irregular repasts, sometimes for senseless gossip and other frivolities. The virgins consecrated to God, employ their leisure in weaving garments of excessive fineness, either to attire themselves as if they were the brides of men, or to bestow them on strangers. For this the vengeance of heaven will

Disorders noted in the community of Coldingham, by the monk Adamnan.

[97] "Sanctimonialis femina et mater ancillarum Christi, nomine Ebba, regens monasterium . . . religione pariter et nobilitate cunctis honorabilis." —Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 10.

send fire to consume the place and chastise its inhabitants." It is evident that these scandals were not by any means so serious as many that occurred elsewhere and at a later period; but in the midst of the general fervor of the new Christians of England they seemed to deserve fire from heaven. Ebba, thus warned, did what she could to amend the state of affairs, and the fire which devastated for the first time her great community did not break out till after her death.[98]

Fervor and austerity of the Northumbrian monks.

It is right to give this incident with some minuteness, for it is the only symptom of decay which we have discovered in the period. With this one exception, no cloud, of which history has preserved any record, obscures the renown of the regular clergy of Northumbria. The universal admiration won for the monastic capital of Lindisfarne by the regularity, the fervor, and the extraordinary austerity of its numerous inhabitants, is proved by all witnesses as with one voice. Their fasts, which came to them by tradition and obligation from Ireland, excited special wonder — fasts very much more meritorious in that raw, damp climate, than those of the fathers of the desert under the burning sky of the East, and which contrasted strangely with the habitual voracity of the Anglo-Saxons, whose sons began to people Lindisfarne and its dependencies. In Ireland the Cenobites, and especially the Anchorites, frequently lived on bread and water alone.[99] Two centuries later, a German[100] monk related to his wondering countrymen that the usage of the Scotic monks who inhabited Ire-

[98] "Cuncta hæc quæ cernis ædificia publica vel privata, in proximo est ut ignis absumens in cinerem convertat. . . . Singulorum casas ac lectos inspexi . . . omnes et viri et feminæ aut somno torpent inerti, aut ad peccata vigilant. Nam et domunculæ quæ ad orandum vel legendum factæ erant, nunc in commissationum, potationum, fabulationum et cæterarum sunt illecebrarum cubilia conversæ, virgines . . . quotiescunque vacant, texendis subtilioribus indumentis operam dant. . . . Post obitum abbatissæ redierunt ad pristinas sordes, immo sceleratiora fecerunt." — Bede, iv. 25. Honest Bede, always so careful in stating the source of his narratives, does not fail to tell us that he had these details from a priest of Coldingham, who, after the fire, fled for refuge to the Monastery of Yarrow, in which the author of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English* composed his work. Let us add that regular discipline was promptly re-established in Ebba's monastery, and that in the following century, at the invasion of the Danes in 870, the nuns, in order that they might not attract the passion of these barbarians, cut off their noses and lips; thus, in saving their honor, winning the glory of martyrdom.

[99] Bede, v. 12.

[100] Ratramnus Corbeiensis, *Contra Græcos*, lib. iv.

land was to fast all the year round, except on Sundays and feast-days, and never to eat before nones or vespers. Bishop Aïdan induced all the communities of monks and nuns in Northumbria to adopt the fast which he observed himself — namely, to eat nothing before nones on the Wednesdays and Fridays of every week, except those between Easter and Pentecost.[101] At Lindisfarne, for more than a century, wine and beer were totally unknown; and the first relaxation of this severity was introduced in favor of a king of Northumbria who became a monk there in 737.[102]

Elsewhere these customs were improved upon by still more notable austerities. At Coldingham, the Adamnan of whom we recently spoke, expiated a youthful fault by taking food only twice a-week, on Sundays and Thursdays, while, at the same time, he often passed the whole night in vigils. He adopted this system from remorse and fear of God, but the love of God at last transformed it into a delight.[103] At Melrose, a monk was held in veneration who, having fallen into a trance, had one of those visions of heaven and hell which made many of the Celtic monks persecutors of Dante. It was his custom to plunge into the waters of the Tweed which flowed by the monastery, to pray there, and that even when the river was covered with ice, which he had to break before he could enter the stream. "Brother Drychthelme," some one called to him from the bank, "how can you bear such cold?" "I have seen it harder and colder," he quietly answered.[104]

A forerunner of Dante.

When a new monastery was to be founded, the Celtic missionaries and the monks trained in their school thought they could not better inaugurate it than by redoubling their fervor and austerity. The son of the sainted King Oswald, who held a kind of provincial royalty in Deira, determined to establish a monastery where he might hear the word of God, and, above all, where he

Foundation of Lastingham. 648-660.

[101] Bede, iii. 5.

[102] Roger Hoveden, ap. Lingard, i. 227.

[103] "Quod causa divini timoris semel ob reatum compunctus cœperat, jam causa divini amoris delectatus præmiis indefessus agebat." — Bede, iv. 25.

[104] "De fluentibus circa eum semifractarum crustis glacierum, quas et ipse contriverat quo haberet locum standi sive immergendi in fluvio. . . . Mirum, frater Drychthelme, quod tantam frigoris asperitatem ultra rationem tolerare prævales. . . . Frigidiora ego vidi . . . austeriora ego vidi." — Bede, v. 12. Bede is careful to mention, as he always does when he relates his marvels, that he has the story from a certain Irish monk, who, as well as the wise Northumbrian King Aldfrid, had often visited and conversed with this Drychthelme.

might be buried, and be benefited after his death by the powerful help of the prayers of those who served God in that place. For this purpose he applied to a monk of Lindisfarne, who had become a missionary bishop among the Saxons of the East, persuading him to accept one of his estates as an endowment. This man of God — Cedd by name — chose a spot among the mountains as difficult of access as possible, and which seemed fit rather for the haunt of bandits or wild beasts than of men. He then proceeded to purify the spot he had selected by prayer and fasting, and asked leave from the king to remain there in prayer the whole of Lent. During this retreat he fasted every day except Sunday till evening, and then took only a little bread, an egg, and some milk and water. Such, said he, was the custom of those from whom he had learnt the rules of monastic discipline ;[105] and such was the beginning of the Monastery of Lastingham, between York and Whitby, which was established on the model of Lindisfarne. We shall hereafter see its abbots holding an honorable place in the annals of the Church of England.[106]

Testimony borne by Bede to the virtues of the Celtic missionaries.

Let us quote once more, in evidence of the virtues of the monks and bishops who converted the north of England, the unquestionable testimony of the celebrated historian, who was at once their adversary and their successor, but who, notwithstanding his dislike, and his strangely exaggerated description of their special peculiarities, yet rendered to the services and virtues of the Celtic missionaries that signal homage which generous hearts delight to accord to the vanquished whom they honor. "The greatness of their disinterestedness and self-denial was very apparent," says Bede, "after their retreat." At Lindisfarne and elsewhere they had only such buildings as were absolutely necessary for existence and decency.[107] They had neither money nor cattle : what the rich gave them they immediately distributed to the poor. They did not consider themselves bound to receive with

[105] "Ne tunc quidem nisi panis permodicum, et unum ovum gallinaceum cum parvo lacte aquæ mixto percipiebat. Dicebat hanc esse consuetudinem eorum a quibus normam disciplinæ regularis didicerat. . . . Expleto studio jejuniorum et orationis, fecit ibi monasterium . . . et religiosis moribus, juxta ritus Lindisfarmensium ubi educatus erat, instituit." — Bede, iii. 23. Whence we can see, says Fleury, that in that country neither milk, nor even eggs, were forbidden in Lent. — *Hist. Eccl.*, l. xxxix. c. 4.

[106] There is still to be seen at Lastingham a beautiful church, believed to be one of the oldest in England.

[107] "Paucissimæ domus . . . illæ solummodo sine quibus conversatio civilis esse nullatenus poterat." — Bede, iii. 26.

splendor the lords and nobles who came to their monasteries for the sole purposes of prayer and to hear the word of God. Kings themselves, when they came to Lindisfarne, brought no more than five or six attendants with them, and contented themselves with the ordinary fare of the brethren. These apostles desired to serve God only, and not the world — they sought to win men through the heart only, not through the stomach. Thus the monkish frock was held in great veneration. Wherever a clerk or a monk appeared he was received with welcome as a true servant of God. Those who met him by the way hastened to bow their heads before him and receive his benediction. Their discourses were listened to by attentive crowds. Every Sunday these crowds flowed into the churches of the monasteries, to gather there the seed of life. As soon as a priest appeared in a village, all the inhabitants clustered round him begging him to preach to them. The priests and clerks travelled through the country only to preach, to baptize, to visit the sick, to save souls. They were so entirely free from all desire of gain, that the princes and nobles had to force them to accept the lands and estates necessary for the founding of monasteries.[108]

Opposition and resistance are not wanting.

It is not, however, to be supposed, that the conversion of Northumbria and of the six other kingdoms of the Heptarchy was carried through without hinderance and convulsions. The monastic historians have made the mistake of dwelling too lightly on the resistance and the revolts which their heroes had to encounter, and which added so much to the merit of what they achieved in the sight of God, as well as in that of man. But enough is visible to enable us easily to fill up what they have left untold. During the two centuries which separate the arrival of Augustine from the accession of Egbert, the perpetual conflict of the savage and uncontrollable nature of the Saxon kings with their new faith and the authority of the bishops and monks, is apparent. Changeable as Proteus, we see them constantly escaping by abrupt changes from all the efforts made to obtain a salutary influence over them. The king who to-day distinguished himself by the fervor of his devotions, and his munificence to the new establishments, would to-morrow abandon himself to all the debaucheries and excesses

Contrasts and uncertainty of character among the kings,

[108] "Tota enim tunc fuit sollicitudo doctoribus illos, Deo serviendi, non sæculo; tota cura cordis excolendi, non ventris." — Bede, iii. 26.

suggested, or pardoned, by heathen instinct. Others sought in the very monasteries, and among the virgins consecrated to God, a prey attractive beyond all other to their ungovernable sensuality. Intestine wars, usurpation, murder, pillage, abominable tortures, violence, and spoliation of every kind, sully at every turn the pages which have preserved to us so many pious and touching incidents. And it was not the kings and chiefs only that were hard to win: the people presented the same difficulties, the same disappointments. In vain the holy bishops and monks, produced so rapidly and in such numbers by the Saxon race, endeavored to win souls and purify them by an exhaustless charity, bestowing with free hands on the poor all the treasures that they received from the rich. Frequently the revolt was open, and the apostle of a district found himself obliged to fly into solitude or exile, there to await the dawn of better days. Sometimes an unforeseen calamity, famine or pestilence, sufficed to convulse the minds of a people, who then in a body would abjure the faith of Christ, and return to their ancient gods. On one side the monks had to struggle without intermission against old customs, which all their zeal could not avail to extirpate, — against the inveterate belief in witchcraft, against the practice of the slave trade, with all its refinements of greed and debauchery ;[109] while, on the other, dull resistance, murmurs, and threats accompanied the work of salvation.

And among the people.

On the north-east coast of England, where the Celtic missionaries had just founded such illustrious monasteries, certain tribes of the coast took vows for their destruction. Bede himself, from whom we have just borrowed so striking a picture of the popularity which surrounded them in Northumbria, forgot, in that description, various particulars which he has recorded elsewhere. It is he who tells how, when the little vessels of the monks, abroad in foul weather, ran the risk of being swamped at the mouth of the Tyne, a crowd of spectators assembled on the shore exulting in their danger, mocking at their self-devotion, and crying with savage irony — "Well done! this will teach them to live differently from everybody else. Perish the fools who would take our ancient customs from us, imposing new ones which God knows how we can observe!"[110]

Joy of the people of the coast at seeing the monks ship-wrecked.

[109] Turner, *op. cit.*, book vii. c. 9, p. 53.

[110] "Stabat in altera amnis ripa vulgaris turba non modica . . . cœpit

Nevertheless, truth and goodness conquered everything. In the long run the humble courage and generous perseverance of the missionaries triumphed over the fury, cunning, and opposition of fallen nature in these children of barbarism. The soldiers of Christ,[111] as from that time the monks were called, remained masters of the field of battle.

CHAPTER III.

PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIANITY BY THE KINGS AND MONKS OF NORTHUMBRIA. — FINAL TRIUMPH OF NORTHUMBRIA UNDER OSWY.

Influence of the three Northumbrian Bretwaldas and their Celtic clergy on the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

1. *East Anglia.* — Vicissitudes of Christianity. — The king, converted by Edwin, is assassinated. — His brother, exiled in France, returns a convert with the missionary bishop, Felix. — The king and the bishop evangelize East Anglia. — Supposed origin of Cambridge. — The Irish monk, Fursy, assists in their work. — The visions which make him a forerunner of Dante. — King Sigebert becomes a monk; he issues from his cloister to fight, armed with a staff, against Penda; and dies on the field of battle. — A king-monk among the Cambrians perishes in the same way fighting against the Saxons. — Anna, the successor of Sigebert, is, like him, killed by Penda.
2. *Wessex.* — Christianity is brought hither by King Oswald and the Italian bishop, Birinus. — Oswald, son-in-law and godfather of the King of the West Saxons. — Popular verses about Birinus. — The son of the first Christian king, who had continued a heathen, and had been dethroned by Penda, is converted during exile; re-established in Wessex, he summons thither as bishop a Frank who had been educated among the Celts, but afterwards desires a bishop acquainted with Anglo-Saxon. — Foundation

irridere vitam conversationis eorum, quasi merito talia paterentur, qui communia mortalia jura spernentes, nova et ignota darent statuta vivendi. . . . Rustico et animo et ore stomachantes. . . . Nullus, inquiunt, hominum pro eis roget, nullus eorum misereatur Deus, et qui veteres culturas hominibus tulere, et novæ qualiter observari debeant nemo novit." — Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 3. This anecdote refers to the time when Cuthbert, though he had reached the age of adolescence, was not yet a monk. He became a monk at fifteen. He was born in 637. It was, therefore, about 650 or 651, and exactly at the time of the great Northumbrian foundations at Hartlepool, &c.

[111] "Milites Christi." — Bolland., t. ii. Jun., p. 236.

of Malmesbury and of Winchester. — An English abbot at Glastonbury. — The Anglo-Saxons begin to occupy the episcopal sees. — A West Saxon becomes the first English Archbishop of Canterbury. — Ercombert, King of Kent, destroys the idols.

3. *Essex.* — King Oswy converts his friend Sigebert, King of Essex, baptized by Finan in the villa of the Northumbrian king. — A monk of Lindisfarne becomes Bishop of London. — The first Christian king of Essex killed by his cousin, because he is too ready to forgive. — The first bishop dies of the plague, and thirty of his friends go to die on his tomb. — Relapse of the East Saxons into idolatry. — A new king and a new bishop, educated by the Celts, bring them back to the faith.

4. *Mercia.* — Influence of the King of Northumbria and of the Bishop of Lindisfarne on the conversion of the Mercians. — The son of King Oswy, married to a daughter of the King of Mercia, converts the brother of his wife, and marries him to his sister. — The Celtic missionaries in Mercia. — Unexpected tolerance of the ferocious Penda towards his son and his converted subjects. But he continues his devastations in Northumbria. — Last conflict between him and Oswy. — Battle of Winwaëd. — Defeat and death of Penda, the last hero of Saxon Paganism. — Oswy offers his daughter to God in acknowledgment of the victory, and founds twelve monasteries. — Final triumphs of the Northumbrians and of Christianity. — Conquest and conversion of Mercia. — Its first five bishops issue from Celtic cloisters. — Opposition of the monks of Bardeney to the worship of St. Oswald. — The Mercians, revolting against the Northumbrians, nevertheless remain Christians.

Summary. — Of eight Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, one only is exclusively converted by the Roman missionaries; four are converted by the Celtic monks alone; and two by the combined action of the Celts and of bishops sent from Rome. — Sussex alone remains to be won, where a Celtic colony resides without influence.

The extension of Christianity by the Celtic monks of Northumbria in the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy.

From the cloisters of Lindisfarne, and the heart of those districts in which the popularity of ascetic pontiffs such as Aïdan, and martyr kings such as Oswald and Oswin, took day by day a deeper root, Northumbrian Christianity spread over the southern kingdoms. Whether this gradual invasion is to be attributed to the preponderating influence of the last three Bretwaldas, all Christians and Northumbrians, or simply to the expansive force of Celtic missionary labor, can never be discriminated. But what is distinctly visible is the influence of Celtic priests and missionaries everywhere replacing or seconding the Roman missionaries, and reaching districts which their predecessors had never been able to enter. The stream of the divine word thus extended itself from north

to south, and its slow but certain course reached in succession all the peoples of the Heptarchy. Life and light infused themselves through all, and everywhere, along with the immaculate sacrifice, the hymns of a people freed from the yoke of idolatry rose towards the living God.

Let us state rapidly the progress of the pacific invasion made by the Celtic monks, trained in the school of the great Columba, into the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms south of the Humber.[112]

I.

CONVERSION OF EAST ANGLIA.

Vicissitudes of Christianity in East Anglia.

We have seen how Edwin, the first Christian Bretwalda of Northumbria, employed his influence over the country where he had spent his exile to convert the king of East Anglia. Unfortunately this first conversion had not been more durable than that of Northumbria itself under Edwin. Eorpwald, the Christian king, had been assassinated soon after his conversion,[113] and this important kingdom, which comprehended so large a part of eastern England, fell back into idolatry. The singular law which made exile the cradle of the faith and the apprenticeship of royalty to so many Anglo-Saxon princes, appears among the Angles of the East as well as among those of the North. Sigebert, the brother of the murdered king, exiled in France from his youth, was there baptized, and there too had come to admire and understand monastic life. Recalled to reign over his own country, he brought thither with him at once the true faith and the life of the cloister. He was accompanied by a Burgundian bishop of the name of Felix, who placed himself under the jurisdiction of Honorius, Archbishop of Canterbury, and was by him appointed missionary bishop of the East Angles.[114] For seventeen years this foreign bishop

636.

King Sigebert and Bishop Felix.

[112] In order to a full understanding of this chapter, the maps must be consulted.

[113] In preference to the chronology of Bede's annotators, I follow, as far as regards East Anglia, that of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which is also adopted by the Bollandists in the Life of St. Felix (vol. i. Mart., p. 780).

[114] The seat of this bishopric was first established at Dunwich, then, that town having been ingulfed by the sea, was transferred successively to Elmham, to Thetford, and finally to Norwich, where it still exists.

diligently sowed the seed of eternal life in his new diocese.[115] As in Northumbria, the king and the bishop labored in concert to extend religion and also Christian instruction, for they founded several schools for the literary education of the young English, in imitation of those that Sigebert had seen in France, and which Felix provided with masters obtained from the great monastic school of Canterbury.[116] The origin of the celebrated University of Cambridge has been attributed by many to these monastic schools.

Origin of the University of Cambridge.

But they were not content to imitate Northumbria at a distance; they entered into close relations with the new Celtic mission of that kingdom. The holy bishop Aïdan became the object of the respectful emulation of the Burgundian Felix, who, like him, had come from across the seas to evangelize the English, and who was encouraged in his respect for the Celtic abbot by the example of the Archbishop Honorius himself, notwithstanding Aïdan's obstinate attachment to Celtic custom in respect to the celebration of Easter as opposed to the Roman usage, of which the metropolitan church of Canterbury was the natural guardian in England.[117]

Ere long a Celtic missionary appeared to assist in the joint work of the king and the bishop. This was an Irish monk, named Fursy, of very noble birth, and celebrated from his youth in his own country for his knowledge and his visions. It would be pleasant to follow the example of Bede, to pause in the tale, and leave the vicissitudes of missionary history in England, to repose ourselves for a little amidst the wonderful revelations of this famed precursor of Dante. Bede had his account of these visions from an old East Anglian monk of his community, as pious as he was truthful, who had heard the Irish saint himself recount his visions. Their character was such that this wonderful man, though but scarcely covered by a thin garment during the rude winters of that English coast, frozen by the east winds, was covered with perspiration at

The Irish monk Fursy. 638-650.

[115] "Totam illam provinciam juxta sui nominis sacramentum, a longa iniquitate atque infelicitate liberatam, ad fidem et opera justitiæ ac perpetuæ felicitatis dona perduxit." — BEDE, iii. 15.

[116] "Ea quæ in Gallia bene disposita vidit imitari cupiens. . . . Pædagogos ac magistros juxta morem Cantuariorum." — BEDE, iii. 18. Cf. WILHEL. MALMESB.; FLORENT. WIGORN; HENRIC. HUNTINGD.; BOLLAND., t. ii. Mart., p. 781.

[117] "Hæc dissonantia paschalis observantiæ, vivente Ædano, patienter ab omnibus tolerebatur. . . . Ab omnibus etiam qui de pascha aliter sentiebant, merito diligebatur . . . ab ipsis quoque episcopis Honorio Cantuariorum et Felice Orientalium Anglorum venerationi habitus est." — BEDE, iii. 25.

the bare recollection of the moving and frightful trances which his spirit had passed through.[118]

Fursy's visions of the punishments of hell.

In the chief of these visions, which Ampère and Ozanam agree in regarding as one of the poetic sources of the *Divina Commedia*, the Irish monk was permitted to contemplate the chastisements reserved for the most abominable sins of his times. "Look," said an angel to him — "look on these four fires that consume the world: the fire of falsehood, for those who renounce the promises of their baptism; the fire of avarice, for those who prefer this world's riches to the love of Heaven; the fire of discord, for those who fear not to injure souls for trifling cause; the fire of impiety, for those who scruple not to spoil and defraud the lowly and the feeble."[119]

This Irish monk came into East Anglia, as he had gone to other countries, to serve God in preaching the Gospel; but one of his visions determined him to remain here longer than was usual to him. The eloquence of his words and the example of his virtues contributed much to the conversion of the heathen, and the confirmation of the Christians in their new faith.[120] King Sigebert received him with great respect, and gave him a large estate surrounded with wood and near the sea, where he might found a monastery. The buildings and wealth of this foundation were afterwards much augmented by the kings and nobles of East Anglia.[121]

At a later period, King Sigebert, who was not only a great Christian and a great philosopher for his time, but also a great warrior, harassed with the contests and troubles of his earthly royalty, resolved to occupy himself no longer with any occupation save the things of the kingdom of heaven, nor to fight except for the King Eternal.[122] Accord-

[118] "De nobilissimo genere Scotorum. . . . Superest adhuc frater senior monasterii nostri qui narrare solet. . . . Adjiciam quia tempus hiemis erat acerrimum et glacie constrictum, cum sedens in tenui veste vir, ita inter dicendum propter multitudinem memorati timoris vel suavitatis, quasi ut media æstatis caumate sudaverat."

[119] "Hi sunt quatuor ignes qui mundum succendunt. . . . Tertius dissentionis, cum animos proximorum etiam in supervacuis rebus offendere non formidant. Quartus impietatis, cum infirmiores exspoliare et eis fraudem facere pronihilo ducunt." — *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. iii. p. 289.

[120] "Cupiens pro Domino, ubicumque sibi opportunum inveniret peregrinam ducere vitam. Angelica visione admonitus cœpto verbi ministerio sedulus insistere." — Bede, iii. 19.

[121] At Burghcastle, in the present county of Suffolk.

[122] "Vir per omnia christianissimus atque doctissimus. . . . Tantumque rex ille cœlestis regni amator factus est, ut ad ultimum relictis regni negotiis . . . atque accepta tonsura pro æterno rege militare curaret." — Bede, ii. 16; iii. 18.

ingly he received the tonsure, and entered as a monk the monastery which he had bestowed on his Celtic friend, the Irish Fursy.[123] He thus set the first example, among the Anglo-Saxons, of a king abandoning secular life and sovereignty to enter the cloister; and, as we shall see, his example was not fruitless.

King Sigebert becomes a monk.

But he was not permitted to die as he hoped in the cloister. The terrible Penda, that scourge of the Saxon confederation, and unwearied leader of the heathen hated his Christian neighbors in the east as well as those of the north. At the head of his numerous Mercians, reinforced by the implacable British, he invaded and ravaged East Anglia with as much fury and success as had attended him in Northumbria. The East Angles, terrified and very inferior in numbers, recollecting the exploits of their old king, sought Sigebert in his cell to place him at the head of their army, his valor and warlike experience being well-known to the soldiers. It was in vain to resist; he could not but yield to the solicitations of his former subjects; but that he might remain faithful to his recent vows he armed himself only with a staff, not with a sword. His devotion was useless; all that he could do was to die for his faith and his country. It was thus, with his staff in his hand, that the king-monk perished at the head of his troops under the sword of the enemy.[124]

He dies fighting for his country. 635.

We may appropriately recall here an incident altogether analogous to this Saxon king's self-sacrifice, the hero of which was a British king fighting against the Saxons. Both had become monks, and were forced in their own despite to leave the cloister and die on the battle-field. Both are too closely connected with our subject to be passed over in silence.

Like Sigebert, the king-monk Teudric falls in battle, but against the Saxons.

Thirty years before the sacrifice of the king of East Anglia — about the year 610 — Teudric, a valiant Welsh king, conqueror in all the battles waged during his reign, abdicated the throne in order to prepare by a period of penitence for

[123] "S. Furseo dedit locum ad construendum monasterium, in quo et ipse post modum relicto regno monachus factus est." — Gervas. Dorob., *Act. Pont. Cantuar.*, p. 1636. But Bede says that he entered a monastery *quod sibi fecerat*, and which is supposed to have been that which has since been known by the name of St. Edmundsbury. — Cf. *Liber Eliensis*, p. 14, ed. 1848.

[124] "Sperantes minus animos militum trepidare, præsente duce quondam strenuissimo et eximio, sed ipse professionis suæ non immemor." — Bede, l. c.

death. He concealed himself in an islet formed by the picturesque course of the Wye, in the wild and solitary spot to which the more recent ruins of the Cistercian abbey of Tintern have attracted crowds of sight-seers. But in the reign of his son, the Saxons of Wessex, under King Ceolwulf, crossed the Severn, which had formed their boundary for more than a century, and ravaged the country as far as the Wye. At his people's cry of distress the generous old man left the solitude where he had lived for ten years, and once more led the Christians of Wales to battle with the Pagan Saxons. He awaited the latter at the ford by which they meant to cross the river which bathed the banks of his solitude. A brilliant victory was the reward of his generous devotion. At the mere sight of the old king, armed at all points and mounted on his war-horse, a panic spread among the Saxons, long accustomed to fly before him; but in the flight one of them turned back and gave him a mortal blow. He perished thus in the arms of victory, his skull split open by a Saxon sword. A thousand years afterwards his heroic remains and venerated relics were identified by means of this shattered skull in the stone coffin wherein his faithful followers had buried him, at the confluence of the Severn and the Wye, six miles distant from the battle-field on which he gave up his life for the safety of his country.[125]

King Anna, successor of Sigebert, killed, like him, by Penda. 635-654.

Anna, Sigebert's successor, sprung like him from the race of Uffa, who founded the East Anglian kingdom, had a longer and less stormy reign. Like Sigebert, he was the zealous helper of Felix and Fursy, the Burgundian bishop and the Celtic monk, in the work of converting his kingdom. Like him, he founded numerous monasteries, and like him had the honor to die fighting for his people, invaded and decimated by the hateful Penda. Though he did not become a monk like Sigebert, he left a numerous offspring destined to adopt the life of the cloister, and thus to expiate the guilty weakness of his brother, who succeeded him, and who, although himself a Christian, became the ally of the heathen Penda in his attacks upon the Christians of Northumbria.[126]

[125] F. Godwin, *De Præsulibus Angliæ*, p. 593, ap. Lingard, vol. i. p. 152; Lappenberg, p. 54; *Liber Landavensis*, pp. 133, 134; La Borderie, *op. cit.*, p. 54, who refers this occurrence to the year 575, while Lappenberg fixes it, after an Anglo-Saxon chronicler, on the 3d January, 610.

[126] Fursy, after having founded in East Anglia various double communities of monks and nuns according to the Celtic usage (*De Virtutibus S. Fursei*, ap. Mabillon, *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, vol. ii. p. 296), quitted the ceno-

II.

CONVERSION OF WESSEX.

Christianity carried to the Saxons of the West by King Oswald and Bishop Birinus.

What Edwin had been to the Angles of the East, his saintly and generous successor, Oswald, was to the Saxons of the West, who under Cerdic, one of those bloodthirsty and warlike chiefs who were said to descend in a direct line from the great god Odin, had founded the most western colony of the Saxon immigration, a colony which had become a kingdom of much vaster extent than the kingdoms of the eastern or southern Saxons, or that of the Jutes of Kent. This realm, which extended from the Thames to the Severn, condemned by its position to endless struggles with the Britons of Wales and of Cornwall — a race always thrilling with patriotic hatred of the invader, and destined in the future to absorb the seven other kingdoms of the Heptarchy [127] — was governed in the time of Oswald by two brothers, Cuichelm, from whose attempt at assassination Edwin had barely escaped, and Cynegils, the father of a princess whom Oswald had asked in marriage. When Oswald came in person for his bride, he met at the residence of the King of Wessex a missionary called Birinus.[128] This bishop — who was perhaps not a monk, and whose origin is unknown — had acquired the Saxon language at Genoa, a port much frequented by the Anglo-Saxons, where the bishop of the place had consecrated him. He had been commissioned by Pope Honorius I. to continue the work of the conversion of the Saxons, and had promised in return that he would sow the seed of life even beyond the territory of the Angles, where no preacher had yet penetrated. But landing on the coast of Wessex,[129] he found the population

bitic life in order to become an anchorite. Then seeing East Anglia more and more ravaged by the incursions of the heathens of Mercia, he decreed the dissolution of his communities and departed to France, where he was well received at the court of Clovis II., that great protector of the Irish monks. He there founded the Monastery of Lagny, and died in 650. We have already spoken of him among the successors of St. Columbanus in France, and we shall find his brother and his disciples among the Irish missionaries in Belgium.

[127] "Britannos antiquæ libertatis conscientia frementes, et ob hoc crebram rebellionem meditantes." — Wilhelm. Malmesb., i. 2.

[128] "An fuerit monachus non constat." — Mabillon, *In SS. II. Sæc. Prætermissis.* Cf. Surius, *De Probatis Sanctorum Vitis*, t. vi. p. 771.

[129] In the existing counties of Dorset or Hants.

there, which no doubt he supposed to be already Christianized, still plunged into the darkness of utter Paganism, and devoted himself to their conversion, believing this to be the best way of keeping his promise.[130]

634.

Oswald becomes the son-in-law and the godfather of the King of Wessex.

The influence of the pious and zealous Oswald came most fortunately to aid the missionary's arguments; and when King Cynegils consented with all his people to be baptized, his son-in-law became his godfather.[131] The baptism was performed at Dorchester, which was erected into a bishopric for Birinus by the twofold authority of Cynegils, as provincial king, and of Oswald, as Bretwalda or supreme head of the Saxon confederation.[132]

The success of the mission of Birinus was rapid and complete. He founded many churches and converted multitudes. Many years after the close of his long and fruitful pontificate popular songs intended for choral singing still celebrated the memory of the *Roman exile*,[133] who had come to emancipate the Saxons of the West from bondage to their idols, and blessed the day which had seen him land on their coasts.

[130] "Promittens se illo (Papa) præsente in intimis ultra Anglorum partibus quo nullus doctor præcessisset, sanctæ fidei semina esse sparsurum. . . . Sed Gewissorum gentem ingrediens, cum omnes ibidem paganissimos inveniret." — Bede, iii. 7.

[131] "Cum rex ipse catechizatus, fonte baptismi cum sua gente ablueretur contigit . . . pulcherrimo prorsus et Deo digno consortio, cujus erat filiam accepturus in conjugem, ipsum prius secunda generatione Deo dicatum sibi accepit in filium." — Bede, iii. 7.

[132] Not the existing county town of Dorsetshire, but a place near Oxford, on the Thames. The episcopal see was, later, transferred to Lincoln. The Saxons of Wessex had two other celebrated bishoprics — Winchester, the cathedral of which Birinus is understood to have founded; and Sherborne, afterwards transferred to Salisbury. The clergy of all these cathedrals were monks.

[133] "*Dignus honore pater* micat aureus ecce Birinus;
Sanctus adest omni *dignus honore pater*.
Exul ad hunc populum qui venit ab urbe Quiritum;
Pro Christo pergens, *exul ad hunc populum*. . . .
Hostica barbaries omnis sedatur in illo;
Deque lupo fit ovis *hostica barbaries*. . . .
Liber adest populus, sub longo tempore servus;
Nunc Christo famulans, *liber adest populus*. . . .
Sit benedicta dies in qua maris alta petisti;
Huc quæ te duxit, *sit benedicta dies*."

This popular song has been published from a MS. of Alençon by M. Edelstand du Méril (*Poésies Inédites du Moyen Age*; Paris, 1854, p. 277). The learned editor marks the systematic repetition of the first hemistich as a kind of refrain meant for a choir of singers. The same MS. contains poems in which he notes the same kind of rhythm, in honor of two other monastic apostles of the Anglo-Saxons — St. Ethelwald and St. Swithin.

The assassin Cuichelm himself was touched, and received baptism on his death-bed, with his son. But the son of Cynegils, Cenwalch, refused to renounce the religion of his ancestors; and when he succeeded to the throne, it might have been supposed that the work of Oswald and Birinus would be overturned by one of those pagan reactions which had already thrown back into idolatry the subjects of the first Christian king of Kent, as well as the Saxons and Angles of the East. But it does not appear that the new king originated any persecution, or indeed any change whatever; and, singular to say, it was the ferocious heathen Penda who was the instrument of Divine mercy in bringing the young unbeliever to the truth which he had refused to receive at his father's conversion. The terrible King of Mercia, whose sister Cenwalch had refused, avenged that injury by declaring war against him. The new converts of Wessex were no more able than those of Northumbria or East Anglia to resist the savage energy of the Mercian pagans; Cenwalch was defeated, dethroned, and exiled. But for him, as for Oswald and Oswy, exile was the cradle of the faith. He sought refuge with the pious King Anna, and in that family of saints[134] he learned to know and to love the faith of Christ. When he was reinstated in his kingdom, he and his people held to their new religion with inviolable fidelity, and during his reign of thirty years he lent active and intelligent assistance in the extension of the Christian faith and of the monastic order. On the death of Birinus, who, notwithstanding his quality of missionary and bishop sent from Rome, has left no trace of his relations with the Roman colony of Canterbury, the Celtic element reappeared among the Saxons of the West, in the person of a Frank, named Agilbert, who had long studied in the Irish monasteries,[135] from which he had newly arrived when he offered himself to King Cenwalch to carry on the work of the deceased bishop. In this he acquitted himself so well that the king, delighted with his learning and activity, induced him to agree to become the bishop of the kingdom. But at the end of ten years, the same king, who understood nothing but Saxon, grew tired

648.

650.

Cenwalch wishes to have a bishop who

[134] "Nam et ipse apud quem exulabat rex erat vir bonus, et bona et sancta sobole felix." — BEDE, l. c.

[135] "Venit de Hibernia pontifex quidam, nomine Agilbertus, natione quidem Gallus, sed tunc legendarum gratia Scripturarum in Hibernia non parvo tempore demoratus." — *Ibid.*

can preach in Anglo-Saxon.

of listening to sermons delivered either in Latin or in that Celtic tongue which he considered barbarous. He does not, however, seem to have been animated by any systematic hostility against the British Celts, who formed a numerous class amongst his subjects; for while he fulfilled a promise made at his father's death-bed, and founded for his Saxons at Winchester the great monastery which has become one of the most important monuments of English architecture,[136] he at the same time protected and favored the national sanctuary of the Celts at Glastonbury. A deed of gift exists in which he engages the monks of that British sanctuary to pray for the Saxon king beside the tomb of Arthur. In his reign, it is true, a Saxon for the first time became abbot of the great Celtic monastery;[137] but, on the other hand, it was also under him that the Celt Maïdulphe, a professed monk, and at the same time a distinguished philosopher,[138] came from Ireland or Scotland to lay the humble foundations of an abbey which preserves a trace of his name in the later splendors of Malmesbury.

Nevertheless King Cenwalch wanted a bishop who spoke Saxon,[139] and found him in the person of a certain Vini, who had been ordained in France; and for whom he constituted a new bishopric in connection with his recent monastic establishment of Winchester. Agilbert, however, instead of congratulating himself, as he ought to have done, on seeing the far too extensive field of his labors diminished, to the great profit of his flock, by the arrival of this fellow-workman native to the soil, was so irritated that he threw up his episcopate and returned to France, where he became Bishop of Paris.

The Anglo-Saxons gradually obtain the episcopal sees.

The need of and wish for native bishops increased, however, more and more among the Anglo-Saxons. The first who was invested with the episcopal dignity was Ithamar, a native of Kent, who was summoned to succeed the aged Paulinus in the see of Rochester, where the latter had found an honorable retreat after his flight from Northumbria. It was the Archbishop Honorius of Canterbury, himself a Roman monk, like his four predecessors, who chose Ithamar, ac-

644.

[136] Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, t. i. p. 31.

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[138] "Natione Scotus, eruditione philosophus, professione monachus." — Wilh. Malmesb., i. 2.

[139] "Rex qui Saxonum tantum linguam noverat, pertæsus barbaræ loquelæ, subintroduxit in provinciam alium suæ linguæ episcopum." — Bede, l. c.

knowledging him to be a man fully capable of rivalling both in knowledge and virtue the Roman bishops who had hitherto occupied the two Kentish bishoprics.[140]

The small kingdom of Kent, which owed its importance, and perhaps the maintenance of its independence, to the possession of the metropolis of Canterbury, was at this time governed by Ercombert, grandson of the first Christian king, who showed himself even more zealous than his grandsire for the new religion. He enforced the observance of Lent by severe penalties, and gave orders for a general destruction of the idols and heathen temples which had been spared for the previous fifty years, notwithstanding the conversion to Christianity of the great majority of the inhabitants.[141] It was in his reign that, on the death of the archbishop, the last survivor of Augustin's Italian mission, the rank of metropolitan was, after two years' hesitation and delay, conferred, for the first time, on an Anglo-Saxon. The newly converted realm of Wessex had the honor of furnishing to England her first native primate. This fifth successor of Augustin was named Frithona, but thought fit to change that Teutonic name for the purely Roman one of *Deusdedit*. He was consecrated by the English Ithamar, and did not hesitate to remain in friendly relations, or rather to resume intercourse, with the Celtic bishops, who up to this time had scarcely recognized the supremacy of the Church of Canterbury.[142]

640–664.

653.

Frithona, the West Saxon, is Archbishop of Canterbury. 6th March, 655.

III.

CONVERSION OF THE SAXONS OF THE EAST.

Whatever may have been the influence of the saintly King Oswald on the conversion of the West Saxons, it was assuredly less direct and less effectual than that of his brother and successor Oswy upon the Saxons of the East and the midland Angles. It must, indeed, be acknowledged that, of all the Northumbrian

Action of Northumbria on the kingdom of Essex.

[140] "De gente Cantuariorum, sed vita et eruditione antecessoribus suis æquandum." — Bede, iii. 14.

[141] "Cum avus et pater sitra destructionem idolorum fidem nostram coluissent." — Will. Malmesb., *De Gest. Reg. Angl.*, l. i. c. 1.

[142] Hook, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

kings, it is Oswy, stained as he was with the innocent blood of King Oswin, who did most for the extension and defence of Christianity in England.

King Oswy converts his friend King Sigebert. 653.

Sigebert, named *the Good* — king of those West Saxons whom we recently saw driving Mellitus from his bishopric of London, and renouncing the faith which had been urged on them by the preachings of that companion of Augustin, and the influence of the Bretwalda Ethelbert — was Oswy's special friend. Sigebert the Good had dethroned the posterity of those three princes who demanded the communion from the hands of the Christian bishop without having been baptized.[143] He frequently came into Northumbria to visit Oswy as a friend, but doubtless also as the Bretwalda, the sovereign of the confederation, who alone was able to protect the petty kingdom of Essex against its much more powerful neighbors of Wessex and Mercia. Oswy, on those occasions, spoke much to him on the subject of idolatry; he took pains to make him understand that gods could not be made by the hand of man of stone or wood, the rest of which might be put to the vilest uses; but that rather far he should believe in a God incomprehensible and invisible, but all-powerful and eternal, able to govern the world which He has created, and which He will judge, whose throne is in heaven, and not made of worthless metal, and who promises everlasting rewards to such as learn His will and do it on earth. Sigebert suffered himself to be won over by these brotherly and repeated exhortations. After long deliberation with his faithful counsellors, according to the invariable custom of the Saxon kings, and fortified by their unanimous assent, he received baptism, along with his whole court,[144] at the hands of the Celtic bishop Finan, in a royal villa of the Northumbrian kings, called *Ad Murum* (on the wall), from its proximity to the famous rampart built by the Emperor Severus to restrain the incursions of the Caledonians.[145]

[143] See above, p. 197. Compare LAPPENBERG, Genealogical Table B. of vol. i.

[144] "Fidem quam olim . . . abjecerant . . . instantia regis Oswin receperunt . . . frequenter solebat eum hortari . . . hæc et hujus modi multa cum rex Oswin regi Sigeberto amicabili et quasi fraterno consilio sæpe inculcaret; tandem juvante amicorum consensu credidit, et tacto cum suis consilio cum exhortatione, faventibus cunctis et adnuentibus fidei baptizatus est." — BEDE, iii. 22.

[145] *Ad Murum.* This spot is believed to have been at Walton, or rather at Wallbottle, near Newcastle.

A monk of Lindisfarne becomes Bishop of London. 653.

The new Christian was unwilling to return to his kingdom without being accompanied by missionaries commissioned to preach to his people the faith which he had just embraced. For these instructors he applied, naturally, to his friend and brother the king, whom he regarded as the author of his own conversion. Oswy gave him a monk of the great Celtic Monastery of Lindisfarne, named Cedd, a Northumbrian by birth, who had already distinguished himself in a mission to the pagans of Mercia.[146] Cedd accordingly went over the whole kingdom of Sigebert, and gathered in a first and ample harvest of souls; after which he returned to Lindisfarne, to be there consecrated bishop of the West Saxons, whose capital and episcopal see, formerly occupied by the Roman monk Mellitus, was at London. The monk of Lindisfarne succeeded where the monk of Mount Cœlius had failed. He ordained numerous priests and deacons to assist him in preaching and baptizing, and founded many churches and monasteries, in which he endeavored to induce the best of his converts to adopt the life of the cloister, as far at least as the rudeness of their habits would permit.[147] He himself made continued journeys to Lindisfarne, in his native Northumbria, to renew his spirit, and to draw from the stern penances and bracing traditions of his order the energy he needed to cope with the difficulties of his task.[148]

The end of King Sigebert the Good shows, with sufficient plainness, the nature of those difficulties, and the combination of firmness and sagacity which was required to overcome them. One of the earls, or principal lords of the country, a near kinsman of the king, having persevered in an illicit connection in spite of the repeated representations of the bishop, Cedd excommunicated him, forbidding any one to enter his house or to eat with him. The king took no notice of this prohibition, and at the invitation of the earl went to dine with him. As he left the house he met the bishop.

[146] Bede, iii. 21. Compare *Act. SS. Bolland.*, t. i. Jan., p. 373.

[147] "In quibus collecto examine famulorum Christi, disciplinam vitæ regularis, in quantum rudes adhuc capere poterant, custodire docuit" — Bede, iii. 23.

[148] "Solebat . . . sæpius etiam suam, id est Northanhymborum, provinciam exhortandi gratia, revisere." — Bede, iii. 23. It was in one of these journeys that he was detained by the son of King Oswald, who reigned over a part of Deira, and who had at his court as priest a brother of Cedd. This prince, Ethelwald by name, persuaded Cedd to accept an estate from him, in order to found a monastery, which might serve as the place of his burial — the Monastery of Lastingham, of which we have spoken above, p. 273.

Both were on horseback, and dismounted to greet each other. The king, affrighted, threw himself at the feet of the bishop, imploring pardon for his fault. The bishop, irritated, touched him with the staff which he carried in his hand, and said to him, "Since you have not chosen to abstain from entering the house of that reprobate, there you shall die." [149] And, in fact, some time after, the same earl and his brother slew the king, whose kinsmen they were. When they were asked the reason of their crime, they assigned no other than the anger they felt at seeing the chief of their race pardon his enemies so readily — granting pardon as soon as it was asked, according to the precept of the Gospel. And certainly, adds honest Bede, we may believe that such a death sufficed, not only to expiate his disobedience to the bishop, but also to increase his merits in the sight of God.

Death of King Sigebert of Essex. 660.

This zealous prelate, whom we shall meet again farther on, survived his royal convert, whom he had so severely judged, and baptized Sigebert's successor. Afterwards, in one of his too frequent excursions to Northumbria, Cedd was seized with a contagious malady, and died at the Monastery of Lastingham, which he had founded, and of which one of his three brothers, like himself all priests and monks of Lindisfarne, was abbot. When the news of his death reached his diocese, thirty East Saxons, whom he had made monks, started in all haste for the north. They sought the monastery where lay the body of their father and founder, with the intention of living there near his remains, or dying and finding their last repose beside him, if such were the will of God. Their desire was quickly granted. At the end of a few days they all died of the same disease that had cut short the bishop's life.[150] How is it possible but to esteem, in spite of his severity, a bishop capable of inspiring such a rare affection? And how, also, is it possible not to love those rough Saxons, scarce converted, but moved even in the cloister by that passionate self-devotion, by that necessity of giving life for the beloved which, in the midst of their natural fierceness, continued the distinctive feature of the Anglo-Saxon race?

Death of Cedd and of his thirty friends. 664.

[149] "Episcopus pariter desiluit: sederat enim et ipse in equo. . . . Dico tibi quia noluisti te continere a domo perditi et damnati illius, tu in ipsa domo mori habes." — Bede, iii. 22.

[150] "Cupientes ad corpus sui patris, aut vivere, si sic Deo placeret, aut morientes ibi sepeliri." — Bede, iii. 23.

Relapse of the East Saxons into idolatry. King Sebbi.

Yet, notwithstanding, these same Saxons, so easily gained and attached by the light and the virtue of the Gospel, often fell back with a lamentable and surprising facility into the depths of Paganism. Bishop Cedd and his thirty friends were scarcely dead when the people whose apostle and master he had been, apostatized almost in a body. The same disease which had taken from them their bishop, so terrified the East Saxons by its ravages that the king, nobles, and people rivalled each other in their eagerness to restore the temples and altars of offended Woden, hoping thus to ward off the contagion from themselves. Happily another king, named Sebbi, uncle and colleague of 665. the apostate, stood firm, and succeeded in bringing back the whole nation to Christianity, with the aid of the Bishop of the Mercians, a Saxon by birth, but, like so many other pontiffs and missionaries, trained by the Celtic monks of Iona and Lindisfarne.[151] The narratives of Bede, which serve to guide us across the maze of the races and dynasties of the Heptarchy, were taken by him from the lips of a priest who had accompanied this very active and zealous bishop in his unwearied journeys throughout all the corners of the kingdom of Essex, to preach the faith and raise up again the altars of Christ. According to his testimony, the inhabitants were turned back to idolatry less by hostility against Christianity than by indifference as to the future life, of which many denied the very existence. But as soon as the churches were reopened, a multitude of Christians reappeared, who loudly declared they would rather die in the faith of the resurrection of our Lord than live under the impure shadow of their idols.[152]

[151] "Iarumanus, Anglicus natione, sed a Scotis episcopis ordinatus." — *Anglia Sacra*, t. i. p. 425.

[152] "Diligentes hanc vitam et futuram non quærentes, sive etiam non esse credentes. . . . Juxta quod mihi presbyter qui comes itineris ille et cooperator verbi extiterat, referebat. . . . Magis cum fide resurrectionis in illo mori, quam in perfidiæ sordibus inter idola vivere cupientes." — Bede, iii. 30.

IV.

CONVERSION OF THE MERCIANS, OR MIDLAND ENGLISH.

Influence of the king and bishop of the Northumbrians in the conversion of the Mercians.

The personal influence of King Oswy as a preacher of the Gospel, the royal villa at the foot of the old Roman wall, scene of the baptism of the first converts, and the intervention of the Celtic bishop Finan as administrator of the sacraments — all these details, which impress a special character on the conversion of the Eastern Saxons, are identically reproduced in the history of the conversion of the Mercians. But it will be understood how much more difficult and important this task must have been, when the fierceness of the bloody wars, waged during the thirty years of Penda's reign against Christian Northumbria, is considered, and especially when the vast extent of the kingdom of Mercia, almost as large as Northumbria itself, and embracing all the country that lies between the Thames, the Humber, and the Severn, is called to mind. The population of this kingdom was composed of very diverse elements, — first, of great numbers of the conquered Britons; then of Saxon settlers;[153] and, finally, of Angles, especially concentrated on the south-west frontier of Northumbria.[154] Towards the end of his long reign, the ferocious Penda had intrusted the government of the Angles of the Middle to his eldest son Peada. It was through him that Christianity and the Northumbrian influence penetrated into Mercia, and succeeded in beginning operations upon this formidable remnant of darkness, encircled on all sides by newly Christianized states, which still offered a vast and inviolable asylum to Saxon Paganism.

The Mercian Prince Peada asks in marriage the daughter of King Oswy.

As elsewhere, love and marriage had a certain part to play in this revolution. During one of those truces which the sagacious policy of Oswy continued to obtain from ill-starred Northumbria, always bathed in blood or wrapt in flames by the implacable chief of the Mercians, the young Peada, who had

[153] Among others, the Wuiccas on the west, and the Girwas on the east, who are often mentioned by the historians of the period. They had their own kings, whose charters figure among the very limited number of those whose authenticity is recognized by Kemble.

[154] These Angles bore the name of *Middle Angles*, or English of the Middle, to distinguish them from the East Angles, or Angles of the East.

all the virtues and all the external advantages which the Saxons prized most highly in their kings, came into Northumbria to ask the hand of Alchfleda, the daughter of Oswy. Oswy replied that he could not give his daughter to an idolater, and that, in order to win her, Peada and the nation of Angles governed by him must be converted and baptized. The young prince then put himself under instruction, most probably by Bishop Finan: and from the moment when he understood the teachings, and especially the promises, of the Christian faith, the hope of the resurrection, and of that future and everlasting life which the Saxons of the East had been so unwilling to admit, he declared that he would become a Christian, even though the princess whom he sought to wed were refused to him.[155] But Peada seemed to be drawn towards the light of truth even less by his love to Alchfleda than by his friendship for Alchfrid, the brother of the princess. Alchfrid was already his brother-in-law, having married the King of Mercia's daughter, in whom he had found not only a Christian, but a saint,[156] destined to confirm by a new example the providential law, which, amidst the descendants of Odin, selected those who were most marked by the obstinacy and ferocity of their paganism as the progenitors of a race of saints, and especially of saintly women. It would be desirable to have fuller details of the circumstances which brought these two young princes together, and made them friends and brothers before they became related by marriage. We know only that it was Alchfrid who, of all the preachers of the truth, exercised the strongest influence upon the convictions of his friend. The future King of the Mercians received baptism from Bishop Finan at the villa near the Roman wall on the same spot, and almost at the same date, as the King of the West Saxons. The earls, the thanes, and the men of war (called at a later period counts, lords, and knights) who had accompanied the young Peada to the Northumbrian court, were baptized all along with him, as were also their servants.[157]

Oswy's son marries Penda's daughter.

Union of the two brothers-in-law.

Baptism of Peada.

653.

[155] "Juvenis optimus, ac regis nomine ac persona dignissimus . . . nisi fidem Christi et baptisma cum gente cui præerat, acciperet. At ille, audita prædicatione veritatis, et promissione regni cœlestis, speque resurrectionis ac futuræ immortalitatis, libenter se Christianum fieri velle confessus est, etiamsi virginem non acciperet." — Bede, iii. 21.

[156] Her name, like that of the wife of the heroic Oswald, was Kyneburge, and, later, she became a nun along with her sister Kyneswitha.

[157] "Persuasus maxime ad percipiendam fidem a filio regis Oswin . . .

Missionaries from Lindisfarne in Mercia.

When the Mercian prince, carrying back with him his young wife, returned a Christian from a country which had already been Christianized for twenty years, his companions formed a most precious and effectual nucleus for the complete conversion of Mercia. Oswy had added to their party, in the capacity of missionaries, four monks trained at Lindisfarne, and endowed with the knowledge and virtues which seemed to him needful for the evangelizing of the new province which was to be won over to Christianity. Three of them were Anglo-Saxons, and among these three was Cedd, whom Oswy almost immediately recalled, to intrust him with the mission to the Eastern Saxons. The fourth, named Diuma, was a Celt by birth, and it was he who became the first bishop of the Mercians. These missionaries obtained a rapid and unhoped-for success. The Middle Angles listened to them with manifest sympathy, and every day the nobles and the common people flocked in great numbers to be baptized.[158]

The behavior of the savage Penda to his newly converted son and his companions was as singular as it was unexpected. It was to have been looked for that this fierce and unwearied enemy of the Christian kings and nations near him would become the violent persecutor of his own Christian subjects. But it was not so; and, indeed, the history of his frightful ravages in Northumbria and elsewhere records no special indication of enmity against the Christians: no doubt he did not spare them, but there is no proof of his having persecuted them with a peculiar hatred. As to his own kingdom, not only did he take no steps to punish his eldest son and the other converts, but he allowed the Northumbrian missionaries freely to preach the Gospel to all who wished to hear them in those districts, the exclusive sovereignty of which he had reserved to himself. This barbarian ravager and pagan gave thus an example of toleration by which many Christians in ages more enlightened than his might be profited. He confined himself to evincing haughtily his dislike and contempt for those who, after having received the faith of

Penda's toleration of his Christian subjects.

qui erat cognatus et amicus ejus. . . . Baptizatus cum omnibus qui secum venerant comitibus ac militibus eorumque famulis universis." — Bede, iii. 21.

[158] "Qui ad docendam baptizandamque gentem illius, et eruditione et vita videbantur idonei . . . prædicabant verbum et libenter audiri sunt, multique quotidie nobilium et infimorum, abrenuntiatâ sorde idolatriæ, fidei sunt fonte abluti." — Bede, iii. 21.

Christ, did not practise its works. "Those who despise," said he, "the laws of the God in whom they believe, must be despised as wretches." [159]

Penda, however, continued none the less the pitiless foe of the princes and people of Northumbria. This bloodthirsty and stubborn hatred led him to his destruction.

Last struggle between Oswy and Penda.

It was only at the last extremity that Oswy resolved to engage in a final conflict with the terrible enemy who had conquered and slain his two predecessors, Edwin and Oswald. It has been seen that he married his son and his daughter to children of Penda; and he gave him another of his sons as a hostage. But Penda would not consent to any durable peace. During the thirteen years that had elapsed since the overthrow of Oswald and the accession of Oswy, he had periodically subjected Northumbria to frightful devastations. In vain Oswy, driven to desperation, offered him all the jewels, ornaments, and treasures of which he could dispose, as a ransom for his desolated and hopeless provinces. The arrogant and fierce octogenarian refused everything, being resolute, as he said, to exterminate the whole Northumbrian race, from first to last. "Well, then," said Oswy, "since this heathen contemns our gifts, let us offer them to one who will accept them — to the Lord our God." [160] He then made a vow to devote to God a daughter who had just been born to him, and at the same time to give twelve estates for the foundation of as many monasteries. After this he marched at the head of a small army against Penda, whose troops were, according to Northumbrian tradition, thirty times more numerous. Besides his Mercians, Penda led to battle a crowd of auxiliaries under the command of thirty chiefs who bore the title of king; first of all, the implacable Britons, his constant allies against the Angles of the North; then a body of East Anglians; and finally, by an inexcusable treason against his country and his uncle, the nephew of Oswy, the son of his

[159] "Nec prohibuit Penda rex quin etiam in sua, hoc est, Merciorum natione, verbum, si qui vellent audire, prædicaretur. Quin potius odio habebat et despiciebat eos quos fide Christi imbutos, opera fidei non habere deprehendit, dicens contemnendos esse eos et miseros qui Deo suo quem crederent obedire contemnerent." — Bede, iii. 21.

[160] "Cum acerbas atque intolerabiles pateretur irruptiones . . . dummodo ille provincias usque ad internecionem vastare desineret . . . qui totam ejus gentem a parvo usque ad majorem delere atque exterminare decreverat. . . . Si paganus nescit accipere nostra donaria, offeramus ei qui novit, Domino nostro Deo." — Bede, iii. 24.

brother, who had been killed by Penda, the same Ethelwald who reigned over a portion of Deïra.

Battle of Winwæd. 15th Nov., 655.

Notwithstanding the enormous disparity of the forces, the battle, which was fought on the banks of a river near the site of the present town of Leeds, was lost by Penda. The traitor Ethelwald sought safety in flight as soon as the struggle commenced, but the other allies, Britons and East Anglians, were exterminated. The vanquished in their flight found the river in flood, so that a larger number perished in the waters than by the sword.

Death of Penda, the last champion of paganism.

Penda was slain fighting valiantly in the *mêlée*. Thus perished at the age of eighty years, after a reign of thirty, the conqueror and murderer of five Anglo-Saxon kings,[161] the last and indefatigable champion of paganism among the Anglo-Saxons, the ally and too effective instrument of the vengeance of the old British Christians against their converted invaders.[162]

Final triumph of Northumbria and of the Christian cause.

This battle decided the fate of England: it not only insured the emancipation and temporary preponderance of Northumbria; but it put a period to the struggle which for 200 years the British had maintained against the Anglo-Saxons. Henceforth there might be partial resistance and local conflicts, but there was no general attempt, with any chance of success, to repel the progress of invasion. All the little British kingdoms which occupied the existing counties of Chester, Lancashire, and Westmoreland, on the coast of the Irish Channel, were finally swept away and taken possession of by the Saxons of Northumbria.[163]

Farther, it sealed the political and military triumph of the new religion, in the very bosom of the Heptarchy, over that external and official paganism which was the religious tradition of the nation. But this triumph was far from being sufficient for the designs of God, and for the deliverance of

[161] Two kings of Northumbria, Edwin and Oswald; and three of East Anglia, Sigebert, Egeric, and Anna.

[162] "Fertur quia tricies majorem pagani habuerint exercitum . . . triginta legiones ducibus nobilissimis instructas . . . duces regii triginta qui ad auxilium venerant pene omnes interfecti." — Bede. Compare La Borderie, *op. cit.*, pp. 223-225. The battle-field is now called Winn Moor, and the river the Broad Are.

[163] La Borderie, *op. cit.*, p. 227. Cumbria alone remained to them: the country of the Kymri or Cumbrians, now Cumberland, formed a small kingdom which recovered its independence after the death of Oswy's sons, and maintained it till the tenth century, like the other small British kingdom of Strathclyde, between the Solway and the walls of Severus.

the souls of men. There was an inner paganism, infinitely more difficult to overcome — the paganism of the savage morals and uncurbed passions of a conquering race. The valiant sword of the Northumbrians might well gain the mastery over oppressors and ravagers; but the word, and above all, the virtue, of the monks was needed to propagate and consolidate the faith, and root it deeply in the heart and life of the victors.

How Oswy, when victorious, fulfilled his vow.

Oswy faithfully kept his word to God and to the Christian people. He set apart the twelve estates to be thenceforth monastic property — six in the north and six in the south of his double kingdom — to form an endowment for monks who should substitute for the warlike service by which these domains were usually held an unceasing prayer for eternal peace.[134] He then took his daughter Elfleda, who was but yet a year old, and consecrated her to God by the vow of perpetual virginity. Her mother, the daughter of Edwin, first Christian King of Northumbria, had been thus dedicated to God from her birth, but only by baptism, and as a token of the gratitude of a still pagan father for the protection of the Christians' God. The daughter of Oswy was to be the price of a yet greater gift of Heaven — the conclusive victory of his race, and of the Christian faith in his country: the sacrifice thus imposed on her reminds us of that of Jephthah's daughter. It will be seen that, far from desiring to escape her vow, she showed herself, during a long life, always worthy of her heavenly bridegroom. The king took her from the caresses of her mother, to intrust her, not, as we might have supposed, to his sister the Abbess Ebba of Coldingham, but to Hilda, a princess of the rival dynasty, who nearly ten years before had been initiated into monastic life by bishop Aïdan.

His daughter Elfleda a nun in her cradle.

Oswy achieves the conversion of Mercia.

After the overthrow of Penda, Oswy, now master of Mercia, in right of his victory, undertook with his accustomed zeal to effect the conversion of that kingdom. He left a portion of it to his son-in-law Peada, the son of his terrible opponent, whose ardor in the Christian cause seconded all his efforts for the extension of the true faith. The monk Diuma, born in Ireland, and one of the four missionaries whom Peada had

The first five bishops of Mercia

[134] "In quibus, ablato studio militiæ terrestris ad exercendam militiam cœlestem, supplicandumque pro pace ejus æterna, devotioni sedulæ monachorum locus facultasque suppediteret." — Bede, iii. 24.

are Celtic monks.

brought from Northumbria at the time of his marriage, was consecrated by the bishop of Lindisfarne, and appointed Bishop of all Mercia, including therein the nation of the Middle Angles already converted under Peada. It was necessary that two distinct races should thus be united in one diocese, because of the small number of priests who were worthy of promotion to the episcopate.[165] The pontificate of Diuma was short, but fruitful. At his death he was succeeded by another Irishman, Ceolach, who was reckoned among the disciples of Columba, the great Celtic missionary, as coming from the Monastery of Iona,[166] to which he returned after some years of a too laborious episcopate in Mercia, to seek the peace of cloistered life in that citadel of Celtic monachism. The third Bishop[167] of Mercia, Trumhere, an abbot in Northumbria, and an Anglo-Saxon by birth, came, like his brethren, from the Celtic cloisters, and was, like them, consecrated by the Bishop of Lindisfarne.[168] His two successors, Jaruman and Ceadda, had the same origin; the one was born in Ireland, and the other, a Saxon by birth, had been ordained by the Scots.[169]

It is thus evident that the extension of Christianity and the government of the Church among the Saxons of Mercia were entirely under the influence of Scotch or Anglo-Celtic monks, disciples and spiritual descendants of St. Columba.

659.

This state of matters was not at all altered when the Mercians, rising under three of their principal chiefs, shook off the yoke of Oswy, and took as their king a youthful son of Penda, whom these three earls had kept in concealment since the overthrow of his father. They drove out the officials of the Northumbrian king, but they kept, with the bishop the faith which had come to them from Northumbria, and which was to them now no less dear than their freedom and their reconquered frontiers. They desired,

[165] "Paucitas enim sacerdotum cogebat unum antistitem duobus populis præfici." — Bede, iii. 21. It should be observed that these two races were long before united under the same kings.

[166] Colgan, *Trias Thaumaturga*, p. 488.

[167] Trumhere had been abbot of the Monastery of Gilling, founded by Queen Eanfleda, on the spot of her cousin King Oswy's murder. See above, p. 253.

[168] "Diuma, natione Scotus. . . . Ceollach et ipse de natione Scotorum . . . reversus est ad insulam Hii, ubi plurimorum caput et arcem Scoti habuere cœnobium. . . . Trumheri, de natione quidem Anglorum, sed edoctus et ordinatus a Scotis." — Bede, iii. 21, 24.

[169] "Anglicus, sed a Scotis ordinatus." — *Anglia Sacra*, vol i. Cf. Eddius, *Vita S. Wilfrid.*

they said, to be free, with a king of their own race, on earth, without ceasing to serve Christ, the true and eternal King, so as to gain His kingdom of heaven.[170]

The Mercian monks of Bardeney refuse to receive the body of the holy Northumbrian king Oswald.

Twenty years later, this stubborn repugnance of the Mercians to the yoke of their Northumbrian neighbors manifested itself with painful distinctness among the monks of one of the principal monasteries of the country. It was at Bardeney, in that province of Lindsay (Lincolnshire), the conquest of which had already cost good King Oswald his life. His niece, the daughter of Oswy had become queen of Mercia. It was her desire that this monastery, which was especially dear to her as well as to her husband, should receive the remains of her uncle. The bones of the sainted king arrived one evening, borne in a chariot, at the gate of the monastery, but the monks refused to receive them. "We know well," said they, "that he is holy; but he is not of our country, and in other days he subdued us by force."[171] It was necessary to yield to this explosion of patriotic rancor, and the sacred body had to remain all night in the open air. The next morning the monks were told that a luminous column had descended from heaven on the car which bore the corpse of the Northumbrian king, and had been seen by all the country round about. Upon this they thought better of it, and opened the door of their church to the uncle of their protectress.

675.

His relics thenceforth remained there revered by all. A banner of purple and gold placed over his shrine betokened his twofold dignity as saint and king. But it is not the less necessary to note this first and instinctive outburst of a local and provincial patriotism, sometimes even more powerful than the popular devotion, a new explosion of which long after brought about the murder of the pious queen who had striven so anxiously to endow Mercia with the relics of the great Northumbrian saint.[172] For the history of these times

[170] "Ejectis principibus regis non proprii, fines suos fortiter simul et libertatem receperunt. Sicque cum suo rege liberi, Christo vero rege pro sempiterno in cœlis regno, servire gaudebant." — BEDE, iii. 24.

[171] "Quia etsi sanctum cum noverant, tamen quia de alia provincia ortus fuerat et super eos regnum acceperat, veteranis eum odiis etiam mortuum insequebatur." — BEDE, iii. 11. It is plain that this passage does not favor the interpretation of Father Faber, who sees in the conduct of the monks of Bardeney a repugnance to the Celtic rite and the Scots saints. — *Life of St. Oswald*, p. 68.

[172] "Ut regia viri sancti persona memoriam haberet æternam, vexillum ejus super tumbam auro et purpura compositum adposuerunt." — BEDE,

and races never allows us to forget that barbarism was always ready to reclaim its ancient rights even amidst the blossoming of Christian virtues and monastic austerities.

The entire narrative is very confused, very obscure, in great measure unknown, and much forgotten. But across these darkling foundations of the primitive history of Christian races stirs everywhere a potent and heroic breath, the breath of life, of the true and noble life — that breath which has made out of the confused masses of barbarism those modern Christian nations, free and manly, among whom the place held by England is known to all.

V.

Summary of the successive conversion of the kingdoms of the Heptarchy. 597-655.

In summing up the history of the efforts made during the sixty years between the landing of Augustin and the death of Penda to introduce Christianity into England, the results may be stated thus: Of the eight kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxon Confederation, that of Kent alone was exclusively won and retained by the Roman monks, whose first attempts among the East Saxons and Northumbrians ended in failure. In Wessex and in East Anglia the Saxons of the West and the Angles of the East were converted by the combined action of Continental missionaries and Celtic monks. As to the two Northumbrian kingdoms, and those of Essex and Mercia, which comprehended in themselves more than two-thirds of the territory occupied by the German conquerors, these four countries owed their final conversion exclusively to the peaceful invasion of the Celtic monks, who not only rivalled the zeal of the Roman monks, but who, the first obstacles once surmounted, showed much more perseverance and gained much more success.

All the kingdoms of the Heptarchy have thus passed under our review except that of Sussex, or the Saxons of the South. It was the smallest of all, but one of the earliest founded;[173] and the first German invaders of the southern coast of Great

1. c. This daughter of Oswy was named Osthryda. She frequently lived at Bardency, where she received the visits of the neighboring abbesses, whom she was able to interest in the veneration of her uncle. She was assassinated by the nobles of Mercia in 697. It will be seen farther on, that her husband King Ethelred afterwards became a monk.

[173] By Ælla in 477.

Britain were notorious among all the others for their ferocity and their invincible vigor. Although they were next neighbors to the kingdom of Kent, the Roman missionaries, Augustin's companions, have left no trace of their presence among them, if indeed they ever tried to penetrate there. The Celtic monks, more enterprising or more persevering, made their way thither to form a first station, an advanced post, as it were, of their future army. They founded the very small Monastery of Bosham, protected on one side by the sea, on the other by forests, and here vegetated five or six monks who came from East Anglia, the nearest Northumbrian province, under the leadership of an Irishman, the compatriot and disciple of that Fursy whose strange visions were everywhere narrated. There they served God as they best could, humbly and poorly ; but not one of the Saxons of the country would listen to their preaching, still less adopt their manner of life.[174] This is the only example known to us of a complete failure. And yet the people of Sussex, although the last of all the Saxons to receive the Gospel, owe, as we shall see, that blessing to a monk trained in the school of the Celtic missionaries. This monk, however, by forsaking the rule of his first masters, in order to connect himself more closely with Roman tradition and authority, produced in the new Church of England a revolution which it now remains for us to record.

[174] "Monachus quidam de natione Scotorum, vocabulo Dicul, habens monasteriolum permodicum. . . . In humili et paupere vita Domino famulantes. Sed provincialium nullus eorum vel vitam æmulari vel prædicationem curabat audire." — Bede, iv. 13. Compare iii. 19.

BOOK XII.

ST. WILFRID ESTABLISHES ROMAN UNITY AND THE BENEDICTINE ORDER, 634–709.

"Sanctus haberi
Justitiæque tenax, factis dictisque mereris?
Agnosco procerem."—JUVENAL.

CHAPTER I.

BEGINNING OF WILFRID'S CAREER—ASSEMBLY OF WHITBY.

Birth and early years of Wilfrid. — Note on his biographer Eddi. — Protected by the Queen of Northumbria, he enters at Lindisfarne, then goes to Rome, where no Anglo-Saxon had yet been. — He passes by Canterbury and stops at Lyons, where he separates from his companion Benedict Biscop, and where the archbishop wishes to give him his niece in marriage. — Wilfrid at Rome. — In returning by Lyons he receives the Romish tonsure and escapes, against his will, from martyrdom. — Returned to England, he becomes the intimate friend of Alchfrid, son of King Oswy. — New monastery founded at Ripon, from whence the monks of the Celtic ritual are expelled. — Popularity of Wilfrid. — He is ordained priest by a French bishop. — Southern Ireland had already adopted the Romish computation for the celebration of Easter. — The dispute on this question revived by Wilfrid in Northumbria, and division of the royal family. — The King Oswy follows the Celtic ritual; his wife and son that of Rome. — Importance and nature of the Pascal difference. — Moderation of the Romish Church throughout the dispute. — A rivalry of influence mingles with the ritualistic dispute. — Assembly of Whitby, convoked by the king to end the controversy: composition of the assembly: the two chambers: principal persons; on the side of the Celts, the Abbess Hilda and her two communities, the Bishops of Lindisfarne and London; on the side of Rome, the young King Alchfrid, the old deacon James, and Wilfrid. — The authority of Columba unwisely invoked. — The king pronounces for the Romish Easter, and the assembly ratifies his decision. — Bishop Colman protests, abdicates, and returns to Iona, carrying with him the bones of his predecessor St. Aidan, the Celtic apostle of Northumbria.

While the bishops and monks of Celtic origin were gradually establishing their authority, together with that of the Christian faith, in the greater part of the land of the Heptarchy, protected by the ægis of the Northumbrian kings, and without any ostensible relation either with Rome or with the Roman colony and its official metropolis of Canterbury, a young Anglo-Saxon, destined to transform the Church of England, was growing up unknown. More powerful than the missionaries sent from Rome, it was to be given to him, after many a struggle and many a defeat, to extend the authority of the Holy See over all Anglo-Saxon Christianity, to re-establish, even to his own prejudice, the supremacy of the metropolitan see instituted by Gregory, and to substitute everywhere the rule of St. Benedict for the observances and ascendency of the sons of St. Columba.[1]

Birth and early years of Wilfrid. 634.

This young man was named Wilfrid, and belonged by birth to the highest nobility of Northumbria. He was born in 634, the day after the death of King Edwin, the flight of Bishop Paulinus, and the apparently irreparable downfall of the Romish mission in the north of England.

Of him, as of all the greater saints, and especially of St.

[1] The life of Wilfrid was written by one of his companions, the monk Eddi, surnamed Stephen, whose work is regarded as the most ancient monument of Anglo-Saxon literature after those of St. Adhelm. Venerable Bede did not write till later. He was evidently acquainted with the text of Eddi, which he has sometimes reproduced, but without quoting him, while extenuating to the utmost all the wrongs attributed to the bishops and kings with whom Wilfrid had to contend. This life, so curious and so important for the ecclesiastical history of the seventh century, had remained unknown to Mabillon and the Bollandists when they published, the former his volume of the Acta of this century in 1672, and the latter their third volume of April in 1675. Some time afterwards Mabillon was informed that the MS. of Eddi was found in the Cottonian Library at Oxford. It was communicated to him by Gale, a learned Englishman, and he published it in the supplement to his fifth volume. Gale republished it soon after in his collection of the *Scriptores Historiæ Britanniæ XV.* (Oxonii, 1691), with the new chapters discovered in a manuscript at Salisbury. They were reprinted by Mabillon in the last volume of his *Acta Sanctorum Ordinis S. Benedicti*, with a warm and touching homage to his English correspondents: "Sic integrum exhibemus opus tamdiu desideratum omnibus litteratis, qui humanissimis et clarissimis viris Bernardo et Gaelo gratias meeum habebunt immortales." After this contemporary author, and Bede, who follows him so closely, the life of Wilfrid was written in Latin verse by an English Benedictine of the ninth century named Fridegod, whose poem, though ridiculous in style, contains some new details; then in the twelfth century by the celebrated Eadmer and by William of Malmesbury. *Cf. Act. SS. O. B.*, vol. iii. p. 150, and vol. v. p. 632. The collection called *Lives of the English Saints*, published by the Puseyites in 1844, contains a *Life of St. Wilfrid* by the Rev. Mr. Faber, who died an Oratorian in 1864.

Columba and St. Bernard, it is related that his birth was accompanied by a prophecy of his future glory. The house where his mother lay appeared all at once enveloped in a flame which seemed to reach to heaven. The frightened neighbors rushed to extinguish the fire, when they were met by the attendants of the new mother, who said to them, "Be at ease, it is not a fire, but only this child who is just born." Such a prodigy naturally drew attention to the infant, and all the more because his father was one of the principal nobles of the country, and the boy himself, as he grew up, displayed a singularly gracious nature. While he was still in the cradle, he lost his pious mother, and his father having married a second time, he resolved at thirteen years of age to escape the persecutions of a harsh and haughty stepmother by leaving home and devoting himself to God. For this the consent, not only of his father, but also of King Oswy as chief of the nation, was necessary. At his age a young Anglo-Saxon noble was already treated as a man; he asked and obtained accordingly from his father a suit of armor, with horses and servants in sufficient number to enable him to appear at court in a manner worthy of his rank. Thus equipped he went to seek, not King Oswy, but his queen. He found her surrounded by the leaders of the nobility whom he was accustomed to see and to wait upon at his father's house, and who were already disposed in his favor on account of his intelligence and modesty. They presented him to the young queen, who was only seven or eight years older than himself, and whose heart he gained as much by his youthful grace as by the refinement and truthfulness of his intellect.[2]

He is protected by Queen Eanfleda. 618.

The queen herself was no other than that Eanfleda whose baptism, it may be remembered, had given the signal for the conversion of Northumbria,[3] and who had been the first Christian of the kingdom. Her father was the martyr King Edwin, and her mother Ethelburga, daughter of the royal

[2] "De inclyta gentis Anglorum prosapia . . . nobilitate natus." — EADMER, *Vita*, n° 4. "De utero matris suæ valde religiosæ. . . . Omnes concito cursu pavidi advenerunt. . . . Sustinete . . . ecce modo infans hic natus est. . . . Omnibus in domum patris sui venientibus aut regalibus sociis aut eorum servis edocte ministravit. . . . Privigna (*noverca*. FRIDEGODUS) enim molesta et immitis. . . . Pergens itinere usquedum invenirent reginam regis . . . et per nobiles viros quibus ante in domo patris sui ministrabat laudatus præsentatusque est reginæ . . . erat decorus adspectu et acutissimi ingenii." — EDDIUS, c. 1, 2. "Ut merito a majoribus quasi unus ex ipsis amaretur, veneraretur, amplecteretur." — BEDE, v. 19.

[3] See p. 210.

convert of Augustin, who still lived in the monastery of Lymington, where she had passed her widowhood in retirement. Eanfleda herself was destined to end her days in the cloister under the crosier of that daughter whom she dedicated to God in order to obtain the defeat of the tyrant Penda. The antecedents and the character of the Queen of Northumbria naturally influenced her in favor of the young noble's desire. She granted him, or prevailed with her husband to grant him, authority to renounce all public and military service in order to enter upon a religious life, in which she promised to watch over him. She then confided him to the care of a favorite follower of the king, who himself afterwards retired from the world. This aged warrior conducted his young and noble charge to the great monastic sanctuary of Northumbria at Lindisfarne. There Wilfrid won all hearts as he had won the queen's. His humility and ardor for monastic rule, no less than his passion for study, marked him out for the affectionate admiration of the cenobites. He soon learned the whole Psalter in the version of St. Jerome, and made the contents of all the other books which he found in the library of the monastery his own.[4]

He obtains from the king permission to become a monk at Lindisfarne. 648.

Thus the years of his youth flowed on at Lindisfarne; but before he yielded the half of his long hair to the scissors, which, cutting bare the upper part and front of his head, would have impressed on him the monastic tonsure according to the Irish fashion, he began to find out that all was not perfect in those Celtic rules and traditions of which Lindisfarne was the centre and stronghold in England. With a sagacity much admired by his historians, he determined to make a journey which no other Anglo-Saxon had yet undertaken, and to go to Rome, not merely to obtain the remission of his sins and the blessing of the Mother of the Churches, but also to study the monastic and ecclesiastical observances which were followed under the shadow of the See of St. Peter. The monks of Lindisfarne being informed by their pupil of this extraordinary project, not only used no attempts at dissuasion, but actually encouraged him to accomplish it;[5]

He undertakes a journey to Rome, where no Anglo-Saxon had yet been.

[4] "Concedit in quod petierit, ut sub suo consilio et munimine serviret. . . . Quidam nobilis ex sodalibus regis valde sibi amabilis et fidelis, Cudda. . . . Omnibus statim in amore factus est. . . . Omnem psalmorum seriem memorialiter et aliquantos libros didicit." — EDDIUS, c. 2.

[5] "Adhuc laicus capite. . . . Adhuc inattritam vitam genti nostræ tentare in cor adolescentis ascendit.' — EDDIUS, c. 23. "Necdum quidem adtonsus,

nothing could better prove their good faith and implicit subordination to Catholic unity. Wilfrid then went to ask his father's blessing, and to confide his plans to his royal protectress. Queen Eanfleda, who, after the murder of her father, had taken refuge in the country of her mother at Canterbury, was too much the spiritual daughter of the Romish missionaries not to approve of Wilfrid's design. She sent him with warm recommendations to her cousin-german Ercombert, King of Kent,[6] praying that prince to keep the young pilgrim with him until he should be able to find suitable companions for so long a journey.

652. On his arrival at Canterbury Wilfred exercised the same fascination upon the King of Kent as upon all those who had known him from his childhood. Seeing the young and handsome Northumbrian wholly given up to prayer and study, Ercombert conceived for him the most ardent attachment, and kept him at his court for a whole year. Wilfrid took advantage of this interval to study and adopt the Romish usages as they could be learned in the Roman colony at Canterbury, which was still governed by a missionary brought over by St. Augustin, Archbishop Honorius, now his fourth successor. He took the trouble to substitute, in his happy and flexible memory, the fifth edition of the old version of the Psalter, which was then used in Rome, for the version corrected by St. Jerome, which he had learned by heart at Lindisfarne, and which was used in the Celtic Church as well as in the Churches of Gaul and Germany.[7] Meantime the

Passes through Canterbury. 627-633.

verum eis quæ tonsura majores sunt virtutibus, humilitatis et obedientiæ non mediocriter insignitus. . . . Animadvertit paulatim adolescens animi sagacis, minime perfectam esse virtutis viam quæ tradebatur a Scottis proposuitque animo venire Romam, et qui ad sedem apostolicam ritus ecclesiastici sive monasteriales servarentur, videre. . . . Laudaverunt ejus propositum eumque id . . . perficere suadebant." — BEDE, 1. c.

[6] ETHELBERT, first Christian king, died in 613, married BERTHA, granddaughter of ST. CLOTILDE.

EADBALD reigned from 616 to 640.	ETHELBURGA, wife of EDWIN, King of Northumbria.
ERCOMBERT reigned from 640 to 664.	EANFLEDA, born 626, wife of OSWY, King of Northumbria.

[7] "Rex vero . . . servum Dei . . . mirifice diligebat . . . Psalmos quos prius secundum Hieronymum legerat, more Romanorum juxta quintam editionem memorialiter transmutavit. . . . Secundum petitionem reginæ languentis tædio. . . . Perrexit cum benedictione parentum suorum. . . . Omnibus affabilis . . . corpore strenuus . . . pedibus velox . . . tristia ora nunquam contraxit . . . alacer et gaudens navigio." — EDDIUS, c. 3. "Supervenit illo alius adolescens de nobilibus Anglorum." — BEDE, 1. c.

Queen of Northumbria, impatient for the return of her favorite, urged upon King Ercombert that Wilfrid should commence his pilgrimage, and soon afterwards the monarch gave him leave to depart, sending with him another young Northumbrian noble, Biscop Baduging, equally distinguished by his zeal for study, equally inflamed with the desire of visiting Rome, and whom, under the name of Benedict Biscop, we shall afterwards see filling an important part in the monastic history of his own province.

Thus they started; and it is easy to imagine the joy and ardor of these young and brave Christians, when, after having rapidly crossed the Straits, they began their journey through France. Wilfrid especially, with all the enthusiasm of his age, pursued his way, strong and unwearied, with an affability and gayety which nothing could alter. His companion, a little older, was of a more austere temper; thus it was impossible that they should long agree.[8] On their arrival at Lyons, Biscop proceeded immediately to Rome, while Wilfrid remained some months with the Archbishop Delphinus. Here also was displayed the marvellous empire which this youth obtained over the hearts of the most different persons, from the young queen of his own country and the warlike comrades of his father, to this Gallo-French prelate who was so charmed with him, with the pure and candid soul which was well reflected in the serene beauty of his countenance, that he offered to adopt him as his son, giving him his niece in marriage, and the government of the whole of an adjoining province. But Wilfrid replied, "I have made a vow; I have left, like Abraham, my kindred and my father's house in order to visit the Apostolic See, and to study there the rules of ecclesiastical discipline, that my nation may profit by them. But if God gives me life I will return this way and see you again."

634.

At Lyons, he parts from his companion, St Benedict Biscop.

The archbishop, recognizing the earnest sincerity of his vocation, let him depart for Rome with all his suite; for the young and high-born Northumbrian did not travel as a simple pilgrim, but with all kinds of guides and baggage.[9]

[8] "Decedente ab eo austeræ mentis duce." — Eddius, c. 3.

[9] "Videns in facie serena quod benedictam mentem gerebat. . . . Si manseris mecum fiducialiter, dabo tibi vicinam partem Galliarum ad regendum virginemque filiam fratris mei in uxorem, et te ipsum adoptivum filium habebo. . . . Sunt vota mea Domino . . . ut visitem sedem apostolicam et ecclesiasticæ disciplinæ regulas didicerim in augmentum regis nostræ. . . . Cum ducibus et opibus." — Eddius, c. 4. "Cunctis simul quæ necessitas poscebat itineris largiter subministratis." — Bede, l. c. This Archbishop

Wilfrid at Rome. 654.

On entering Rome, his first thought was to hurry to the Church of St. Andrew, from whence Augustin and the first missionaries to England had set out. Kneeling before the altar, where there was a copy of the Gospels, he implored the Apostle St. Andrew, for the love of that God whom he had confessed by his martyrdom, to open his mind, and to atone for the rustic plainness of his Saxon tongue by giving him grace to study, to understand, and to teach the English nation the eloquence of the Gospel. After which, as he began to visit, one by one, all the sanctuaries of the Eternal City, he met with a wise and holy man, Archdeacon Boniface, one of the principal counsellors of the Pope, who took pleasure in instructing the young stranger as his own child, carefully explaining to him the four Gospels, the ecclesiastical discipline, and the calculation of Easter, which the Celts of Britain and Ireland refused to admit. Finally he presented him to the Pope, to whom he explained the object of the journey of this youthful servant of God: the Pontiff placed his hand upon the head of the young Englishman, blessed, and prayed for him. Thus Wilfrid left Rome, assuredly without suspecting the harsh and cruel trials which were fated to bring him back thither so often again.[10]

Wilfrid receives the Romish tonsure at Lyons.

In returning from Rome, Wilfrid, as he had promised, again stopped at Lyons to see the archbishop, who received him with all his former tenderness, still insisting upon making him his heir. He even remained three whole years with this prelate, occupied in completing his ecclesiastical education among the learned doctors whom he found at Lyons, as if his desire had been to arm himself completely against Celtic usages, by comparing the teaching received at Rome with the venerable traditions of the earliest Gallican Church. Here, too, he received from the hands of the archbishop the tonsure which he preferred,

Delfin or Delphinus is one of the most disputed personages in the history of the seventh century; see the article consecrated to him by the Bollandists in vol. vii. of September, p. 720 to 744. It is he who is venerated in the diocese of Lyons under the name of St. Annemond or St. Chamond.

[10] "De remissione peccatorum suorum, pro qua instantius orabat, per hoc certificari postulabat, si de ingenii sui tarditate et linguæ suæ rusticitate, ipsius interventu, absolvi mereretur." — RICARDI HAGULSTADENSIS, *Hist.*, c. 3. "Ut pro sua intercessione Dominus ei legendi ingenium et docendi in gentibus eloquentiam Evangeliorum concedisset. . . . Qui ponens manum benedictam super caput adolescentuli servi Dei, cum oratione benedixit eum." EDDIUS, c. 5. The Pope was probably Eugenius I., elected in 654, during the exile of the holy martyr Pope Martin I.

no longer that Celtic tonsure which shaved the top and front of the head from one ear to the other, leaving the hair to hang down behind, which the Romans, it is not known why, called the tonsure of Simon the Magician; nor the Oriental tonsure, which completely bared the head, and which was believed to be that of St. Paul; but the Roman tonsure, that of St. Peter, which removed all the hair except a circle round the skull, representing the form of the crown of thorns.

The extreme importance attached to this difference of tonsure, puerile and insignificant as it is in our eyes, will no longer astonish us when we remember the great significance of long hair among all barbarous races, and above all among our Merovingians. Long hair in men was not only the mark of royal or very noble birth, but also a sign of power, daring, and pride. Apart even from the question of ritual unity, Wilfrid and the Romans, without doubt, saw in the persistence of the Celts in wearing long hair, at least at the back of their heads, a vestige of pride and want of discipline incompatible with the ecclesiastical profession, and especially with the life of the cloister.

Wilfrid's visit to Delphinus was cut short by the death of the archbishop, who perished a victim to the tyranny of Ebroïn, then governor of Neustria and Burgundy in the name of the Regent Bathilda, the French queen, once an English slave, who was afterwards to become a nun and a saint. Delphinus was seized in his metropolitan city by the soldiers of Ebroïn, who dragged him to Chalons, and there put him to death. Wilfrid followed him, in spite of the entreaties of the martyr; with the incomparable enthusiasm and heroism of youth, he hoped to partake the fate of his protector. "What could be better," he said, "than to die together, father and son, and to be with Christ?" After the murder of the archbishop, when Wilfrid, stripped of his vestments, waited his turn, the chiefs of the party asked who this handsome youth, so eager for death, might be? and when they were told that he was a foreigner, of the race of those famous conquerors of Great Britain who were feared all over the world, they resolved to spare him. After this, as soon as he had superintended the burial of his spiritual father, he returned to England.[11]

Despite himself he escapes martyrdom.

[11] "Amor magis ac magis crescebat inter eos. . . . A doctoribus valde eruditis multa didicit. . . . Tonsuræ de ore apostoli formulam, in modum coronæ spineæ caput Christi cingentis . . . libenter suscepit. . . . Nihil est

These details may perhaps appear too minute; but they will be pardoned on account of the interest which attaches to the early years of a man destined to exercise, throughout half a century, a preponderating influence over his country, and, through her, over the power and freedom of the whole Church. Nor is it a matter without interest to seize in their very birth the manifestations of that mysterious and disinterested attraction which drew towards Rome, and towards Roman ideas and practices, this noble and daring scion of a barbarous race, this champion whose impassioned constancy contributed so powerfully in the future to link the destinies of England, and, by her means, of Germany and the whole west, to the foot of the apostolic throne.

Wilfrid, after his return to England, becomes the intimate friend of the son of Oswy.

On his return to England, Wilfrid, from the first, by the crown like form of his tonsure, set up a visible and permanent protest against the ascendency of Celtic customs. He thus signified his intention to enter upon the struggle as soon as the opportunity should present itself. It is not known whether he returned to Lindisfarne — at any rate he did not remain there. He was soon summoned to the court of the young Alchfrid, son of King Oswy, whom the latter had just associated in the kingdom. We have already noticed the touching friendship of Prince Alchfrid for the son of the cruel enemy of the Northumbrians, Penda of Mercia, and his influence on the conversion of the Mercians.[12]

melius quam pater et filius simul mori et esse cum Christo. . . . Quis est iste juvenis formosus qui se præparat ad mortem? . . . Transmarinus de Anglorum gente ex Britannia. . . . Parcite illi et nolite tangere eum." — EDDIUS, c. 6. "Quod tunc temporis magno terrori quamplurimis erat, sua scilicet Anglorum natio." — EADMER, n. 11.

[12] Most historians have confounded this Alchfrid, eldest son of Oswy, with his younger brother Aldfrid. Bede, however, has carefully distinguished them by the orthography of their names, and Lappenberg has put this distinction beyond a doubt. Alchfrid, the eldest, who married a daughter of Penda in 653, and was the friend of Wilfrid, died before his father; Aldfrid, probably a natural son of Oswy, educated and for a long time protected at Iona, only returned to succeed Egfrid, the second son and successor of Oswy, and to be the implacable adversary of Wilfrid. See the genealogical table Appendix VI., p. 752. It must be allowed, however, that the confusion which prevails throughout the primitive history of the Anglo-Saxons is greatly augmented by the fondness they had for giving to the children of one family names almost identical: thus, Oswald, Oswin, Oswulf, Osred, Osric, Ostrytha, in the dynasty of Northumbrian kings; Sebert, Sigebert, Sigehere, Sigeherd, in that of the kings of Essex; Ceawlin, Ceolric, Ceolwulf, Ceanwalch, Ceadwalla, in that of the kings of Wessex; Penda and Peada in Mercia, &c. This custom was not peculiar only to the royal families; the Bishop Ceadda had three brothers, Cedd, Cælin, and Cynnbill, all monks like himself.

This young prince, the son of a father who had been instructed in the school of the Scottish monks, and of a mother baptized and educated by the Romish missionaries, had inclined from his cradle to the religious exercises of his mother. He had always loved and sought to follow the Roman rules. At the news that the favorite of his mother, the young and noble Wilfrid, already so well known by his piety at Lindisfarne, had arrived from Rome, and was teaching the true Easter with all the regulations of the Church of St. Peter, Alchfrid sent for him, received him like an angel come from God, and fell at his feet to demand his blessing. Then, after discussing thoroughly the usages of the Roman Church, he conjured him, in the name of God and St. Peter, to remain with him, and instruct both himself and his people. Wilfrid willingly obeyed. To the irresistible attraction which, in his earliest youth, he had exercised over all hearts, there was now joined the authority of a man who had travelled, studied, and seen death and martyrdom close at hand. This increase of influence did but increase the affection of Alchfrid. The young prince and the young monk, one in soul, became still more one in heart; they loved each other with a passionate tenderness, which every day increased. The friendship of David and Jonathan, so often quoted by monastic annalists, appeared to the Northumbrians to be reproduced in that which existed between the son of their king and his youthful countryman.[13]

New monastery of Wilfrid at Ripon, from which the monks who adhere to Celtic rites are expelled.

Wilfrid, with his Roman tonsure, and his ideas still more Roman, could not remain at Lindisfarne. Alchfrid therefore sought not merely to retain him near to himself, but also to create for him a great monastic establishment of which he should be the head, and from whence his influence might spread itself over the Northumbrian Church.[14] The young king had already founded a new monastery at Ripon, in a fine situation, at the confluence of two rivers, and in the

[13] "Catholicas Ecclesiæ regulas sequi semper et amare didicerat." — BEDE, v. 19. "Audiens servum Dei. . . . Verum Pascha prædicantem et S. Petri ecclesiæ disciplinam multiplicem didicisse, quam maxime rex diligebat. . . . Mirifice anima utriusque in alterum conglutinata erat, sicut animam David et Jonathæ in alterum compaginatam legimus . . . de die in diem inter eos amor augebatur." — EDDIUS, c. 7.

[14] Eddi and Bede mention a former donation given by the young king to Wilfrid, and situated at Stanford or Stamford. But no important foundation resulted from this, and they do not even agree as to the position of the domain. We will merely remark that it supported only ten families, while that of Ripon sufficed for forty, according to the Saxon mode of valuing land.

very heart of Deira; he had given it to monks of the Celtic ritual, all the religious communities in the country being composed either of monks of Scottish origin or of Northumbrians educated by the Scots. The first occupants of Ripon had come from Melrose, under the conduct of Abbot Eata, one of the twelve young Saxons whom St. Aïdan, the first Celtic missionary to Northumbria, chose for his future fellow-laborers; and had among them, in the capacity of steward, a young monk named Cuthbert, who was also destined to fill a great position, and to eclipse Wilfrid himself in the devotion of the northern English.[15]

Alchfrid had endowed this foundation with a domain so large that it was inhabited by forty families. But soon, under the influence of those Roman predilections which the return of Wilfrid developed in his mind, he required the new community of Ripon to celebrate Easter at the date fixed by Rome, and to renounce the other customs in which the Celtic Church differed from that of Rome. They unanimously declared that they would rather go away and give up the sanctuary which had just been given them, than abandon their national traditions. Alchfrid took them at their word, and gave them their dismissal. Abbot Eata and the future St. Cuthbert returned to Melrose, and Wilfrid was installed in their place by his royal friend, with the express intention of thus giving him the means of propagating the rules and doctrines which he preferred. Thus the war commenced — a war of which Wilfrid did not live to see the end, although he carried it on for more than half a century.[16] 661-664.

Wilfrid was now at the brightest moment of his life. He employed the bounty of his friend to carry out the generous impulses of his heart, and scattered round him abundant

[15] "Famulus Domini Cuthbertus officio præpositus hospitum." — BEDE, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 7.

[16] Nothing can be more singular than the different manner in which the same historian gives an account of the same events in two different works. And this historian is no other than the Venerable Bede! In his *Ecclesiastical History* he seems to treat the expelled monks as obstinate rebels: "Quia illi (qui Scottos sequebantur) data sibi optione maluerunt loco cedere quam mutare suam consuetudinem et Pascha catholicum cæterosque ritus canonicos juxta Romanæ et apostolicæ ecclesiæ consuetudinem recipere, dedit (Alchfridus) hoc illi quem melioribus imbutum disciplinis ac moribus vidit." — *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 25, v. 19. In his life of Cuthbert he honors them as the victims of an unexpected storm: "Quia fragilis est et mare freti volubilis omnis seculi status, instante subito turbine, præfatus abbas Eata cum Cuthberto et ceteris quos secum adduxerat fratribus, domum repetsus est, et locus monasterii, quod condiderat, aliis ad incolendum monachis datur." — C. 8.

alms; he saw the ideas so dear to him spreading and strengthening themselves; he rejoiced in the protection of a prince who was to him at once a brother and a son; and, to sum up all, he was almost as dear to the people of Deïra as to their king. The nobles and other Northumbrians idolized him, and regarded him as a prophet.[17]

Wilfrid is ordained priest by a Frankish bishop.

The young abbot, however, was not yet a priest; and it was the earnest desire of Alchfrid that his friend should be his confessor, and remain in some degree attached to his person.[18] The whole of Northumbria was then under the rule of Colman, the Celtic Bishop of Lindisfarne; but it was not from him that Wilfrid could have willingly received the sacrament of ordination. However, at this juncture the king received a visit from Agilbert, a Frenchman by birth, educated in Ireland, who, having become Bishop of the kingdom of Wessex, had lost half of his diocese because the king of the country, weary of listening to sermons which were not in Saxon, had chosen to constitute another bishop without Agilbert's consent. He therefore, not willing to sanction this abuse of power, had renounced his see.[19] Although the King of Wessex was the intimate friend of Alchfrid, it was to the Northumbrian court that the displaced bishop first came to seek a refuge before returning to his own country. Alchfrid made known to him the virtue and good repute of Wilfrid, enlarging upon his humility, his fervor in prayer, his prudence, goodness, and sobriety — the latter being a virtue always greatly admired by the Anglo-Saxons, who practised it very little — and last, and above all, the gift which he had of commanding with authority and preaching with clearness. "Such a man is made to be a bishop," said Agilbert, who did not hesitate to ordain him priest in his monastery at Ripon, and, as Alchfrid had requested, for the personal service of the prince and his court.[20]

639-663.

The influence of Wilfrid must have grown rapidly during the four or five years which followed his

[17] "Non solum rex sanctum abbatem diligebat, sed omnis populus, nobiles et ignobiles eum habebant quasi prophetam Dei, ut erat." — EDDIUS.

[18] "Desiderante rege ut vir tantæ eruditionis et religionis sibi specialiter individuo comitatu sacerdos esset ac doctor." — BEDE, v. 19.

[19] See above, p. 286. Cf. BEDE, iii. 7.

[20] "Dicens virum esse . . . sobrium . . . plenum auctoritatis . . . non vinolentum . . . et bene docentem sermone puro et aperto: ideo rogo te ut imponas super eum presbyteri gradum et sit mihi comes individuus. . . Talis utique debet episcopus fieri." — EDDIUS, c. 9.

return to England, and he must have displayed great energy in his attack upon the Celtic spirit of the nation, to have brought about so promptly the decisive crisis which we are about to record. It must be remarked that he alone took the initiative and the responsibility. In this conflict, the object of which was to secure preponderance of Rome, we can find no trace of any mission or impulse whatever from Rome. The Roman colony of Canterbury, whose chief was an Anglo-Saxon, lent no direct assistance; and in Northumbria, as in the neighboring kingdoms, — converted to Christianity by Celtic apostles, — Wilfrid found no aid except the recollection of the abortive efforts of the first Romish missionaries, or the limited influence possessed by priests who had accompanied princesses of the race of Hengist, when they entered by marriage other dynasties of the Anglo-Saxon descendants of Odin; unless it were the testimony of travellers who, arriving from Canterbury or France, might express their astonishment to see the northern Christians, converts of Scottish missionaries, celebrating Easter at a different time from the rest of Christendom.[21]

There was indeed one fact which might encourage him to attempt again, in another region and under circumstances far less favorable, the enterprise in which Augustin had failed. Of the four countries in which the Celtic Church reigned Ireland, Wales, Scotland proper, and Northumbria, with their four monastic citadels of Bangor on the sea, Bangor on the Dee, Iona, and Lindisfarne, Ireland, the cradle and chief home of Celtic traditions, had begun in heart to return to Roman unity. Thirty years before, a council had been held at Leighlin, in the south of the island, at the suggestion of Pope Honorius I., who had invited the Scots of Ireland to celebrate Easter according to the common practice of the Church. The fathers of this council, after much animated discussion, had decided that wise and humble men should be sent to Rome, as sons to their mother, to judge of the ceremonies there. These deputies declared, on their return, that they had seen the faithful from all parts of the world celebrating Easter on the same day at Rome. On their report the Romish cycle and rules relative to the paschal calculations were adopted by all the south of Ireland. This decision had been chiefly brought about by the efforts of a disciple and spiritual descendant of

Southern Ireland adopts the Romish Easter.

[21] Bede, l. c.

Columba, a monk named Cummian, then abbot of one of the Columbian monasteries in Ireland. Abbot Cummian[22] had been obliged to defend himself against the attacks which his partiality for Roman usages brought upon him, by an apologetic letter, still preserved, where his erudition displays itself in an innumerable throng of texts and calculations. He sums up in these decisive words: "Can there be imagined a pretension more perverse and ridiculous than that which says: Rome is mistaken, Jerusalem is mistaken, Alexandria is mistaken, Antioch is mistaken, the whole world is mistaken; the Scots and the Britons alone make no mistake?"[23] But the example of the south of Ireland did not affect the north of the island, and still less the Picts and Scots of Caledonia. The arguments of Cummian could not convince the direct successor of Columba, the Abbot of Iona.[24] He, and all his community, obstinately retained the Irish computation; and as it was precisely at this period that the missionaries sent from Ireland relighted in Northumbria the light of the faith, extinct since the death of King Edwin and the flight of Bishop Paulinus, it is easily apparent how it happened that the erroneous calculation of Easter, according to the Celts, took root everywhere together with the new doctrine. It is not even certain that Wilfrid was aware that anything favorable to his views had occurred in that part of Ireland which was furthest from Northumbria, for we do not find any mention of it in his acts or discourses.

The usage in Northumbria as to the celebration of Easter before Wilfrid.

As long as St. Aïdan, the first Celtic apostle of Northumbria, lived, the idea of finding fault with his method of celebrating the greatest feast of that religion which he taught and practised so well, had entered into no man's mind. Whether he himself was ignorant of the difference of ritual, or whether, knowing it, he did not choose to withdraw himself from the usages of his race and of the parent monastery of Iona, he was not the less the object of universal confidence and ven-

[22] He must not be confounded with Cumin called the White (Cuminœus albus), Abbot of Iona from 657 to 669, author of the oldest biography of St. Columba.

[23] "Quid pravius sentire potest de ecclesia matre quam si dicamus: Roma errat, Hierosolyma errat, Alexandria errat, totus mundus errat; soli Scoti et Britones rectum sapiunt!" — Cummianus Hibernus, *Epist. de Controversia Paschali*, *in* Usserii *Sylloge*, ii.

[24] Segienus, descendant in the fourth degree from the grandfather of Columba, and fourth Abbot of Iona, from 623 to 652. — Cf. Lanigan, *Eccles. Hist. of Ireland*, ii. 389. Döllinger, *Kirchengeschichte*, p. 221.

eration.[25] Under his successor, Bishop Finan, the question had been raised by one of the Lindisfarne monks, Irish by birth, who had travelled and studied in France and Italy. This monk, named Ronan, became involved in a violent quarrel with the Bishop of Northumbria upon the subject. He had led back a few to the Roman observance of Easter, and persuaded others to study the matter; but the bishop, harsh and passionate as Columba himself had sometimes been, far from being convinced, was only embittered by the remonstrances of Ronan, which served chiefly to make him a declared adversary of the Roman cause.[26]

When Finan died, leaving Bishop Colman — like himself, Irish by birth and a monk of Iona — as his successor at Lindisfarne, the dispute became at once open and general. Wilfrid had succeeded in sowing agitation and uncertainty in all minds; and the Northumbrians had come so far as to ask themselves whether the religion which had been taught to them, and which they practised, was indeed the religion of that Christ whose name it bore.[27] 662.

The two Northumbrian kings mingled in the struggle on different sides. Oswy, the glorious vanquisher of Penda, the liberator of Northumbria, the conqueror and benefactor of Mercia, the Bretwalda or military and religious suzerain of the Anglo-Saxon confederacy, naturally exercised a much greater influence from that of his young son, whom he had associated with himself in the kingdom. And the mind of Oswy, who had been baptized and educated by Celtic monks, who spoke their language perfectly, and was probably desirous of conciliating the numerous Celtic populations who lived under his rule from the Irish Sea to the Firth of Forth, did not go beyond the in- Division in the royal family as to Easter.

[25] The judgment of Bede on this aspect of the life of Aïdan deserves to be quoted at length, as much on account of its reserve as of its praises: — "Quod autem pascha non suo tempore observabat, vel canonicum ejus tempus ignorans, vel suæ gentis auctoritate ne agnitum sequeretur devictus, non adprobo, nec laudo. . . . Hæc dissonantia paschalis observantiæ vivente Ædano patienter ab omnibus tolerabatur qui patenter intellexerant, quia etsi pascha contra morem eorum qui ipsum miserant facere non potuit, opera tamen fidei, pietatis et dilectionis, juxta morem omnibus sanctis consuetum, diligenter exsequi curavit: unde ab omnibus etiam his qui de Pascha aliter sentiebant, merito diligebatur." — iii. 17, 25.

[26] "Quin potius, quod esset homo ferocis animi, acerbiorem castigando et apertum veritatis adversarium reddidit." — Bede, iii. 25.

[27] "Unde movit hæc questio sensus et corda multorum, timentium ne forte, accepto Christianitatis vocabulo, in vacuum currerent aut cucurrissent." — Bede, iii. 25.

structions of his early masters.[28] Notwithstanding he had to contend within the circle of his family, not only with his son Alchfrid, excited in behalf of the Romish doctrine by his master and friend Wilfrid, but also with his queen, Eanfleda, who did not need the influence of Wilfrid to make her entirely devoted to the Roman cause, since, on returning from exile to marry Oswy, she had brought with her a Canterbury priest — Romanus by name, and Roman in heart — who guided her religious exercises. Under the direction of Romanus, the queen and all her court followed Roman customs. Two Easter feasts were thus celebrated every year in the same house ; and as the Saxon kings had transferred to the chief festivals of the Christian year, and especially to the greatest of all, the meeting of their assemblies, and the occasion which those assemblies gave them of displaying all their pomp, it is easy to understand how painful it must have been for Oswy to sit, with his earls and thanes, at the great feast of Easter, at the end of a wearisome Lent, and to see the queen, with her maids of honor and her servants, persisting in fasting and penitence, it being with her still only Palm Sunday.[29]

This *discord*, as Bede says, with regard to Easter, was the capital point of the quarrel which divided the Anglo-Saxons into two bodies according as they had received the faith from Roman or Celtic missionaries. The differences remarked by Augustin in his struggles with the British clergy appear henceforward reduced to this one. The great reproach addressed to the Celtic clergy by the envoy of Pope Gregory, that they despised the work of converting the Saxons, is no longer in question. Our Celts of the North had succeeded only too well, according to Wilfrid, in converting and even in ruling two-thirds of Saxon England. Nor at this phase of the quarrel is there any further mention either of baptismal ceremonies, or of the customs contrary to ecclesiastical celibacy,[30] or of any of the other points formerly contested. The

[28] " Illorum lingua optime imbutus, nihil melius quam quod illi docuissent æstimabat." — Bede, l. c.

[29] " Observabat et regina Eanfleda cum suis juxta quod in Cantia fieri viderat. . . . Et cum rex Pascha dominicum solutis jejuniis faceret, tunc regina cum suis persistens adhuc in jejunio diem Palmarum celebrare." — Bede, l. c.

[30] It is now clearly shown that, in the Celtic Church, the deacons and priests never strayed from the Romish doctrine of celibacy. Their continence has been attacked, as that of the Briton clergy by Gildas, but no one has been able to prove that they regarded marriage as a remedy for this incontinence. There were depraved priests, there were also clerks not having

difference of the two tonsures to which Wilfrid attached such great importance, and which must have struck from the first the eyes and attention of the Anglo-Saxon converts, is not even named in the long discussions of which we still possess a record.[31] All turn exclusively on the celebration of Easter.

In what the difference with regard to Easter consisted.

Nothing could be more fanciful and more complicated than this Pascal calculation; nothing more difficult to understand, and especially to explain. Let us try, however, to draw forth some clear ideas from the depths of the endless dissertations of contemporary authors and even of more recent historians. Since the earliest days of Christianity a division had existed as to the proper date for the celebration of Easter. Some churches of Asia Minor followed the custom of the Jews by placing it on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month of the year. But all the churches of the West, of Palestine, and of Egypt, fixed upon the Sunday after the fourteenth day of the month nearest to the vernal equinox, so as not to keep the feast along with the Jews, and the general Council of Nice erected this custom into a law of the Church. Those who had not accepted this law, but persisted in celebrating the fourteenth day, were held as heretics and schismatics, under the name of *quartodecimans*. The imputation of complicity in this heresy made against the Celtic Church by the chiefs of the Roman clergy in a bull addressed in 640, during the vacancy of the Holy See, to the bishops and abbots of the north of Ireland, was most unjust.[32] The only mistake made by the Celts was that of neglecting to keep themselves informed of the difficulties which arose as to the manner of determining the commencement of the first lunar month, which ought to be the Pascal month. As has been already said in respect to the dispute between St. Augustin and the Britons of Cambria,[33] they had remained faithful to the custom which prevailed at Rome itself when Patrick and the other missionaries to the British Isles brought thence the light of the Gospel. At that period, in Rome and in all the West, the ancient Jewish cycle of eighty-four years was universally followed to fix this date. The Christians of Alexandria, however, bet-

received the higher orders who lived with their wives — but nothing more, and especially no excuse for setting up, either as a doctrine or as a regular habit, the marriage of priests.

[31] However, Bede, who has preserved all these discussions, says, in speaking of the tonsure: "Et de hoc questio non minima erat." — iii. 26.

[32] Bede, ii. 19.

[33] See p. 175.

ter astronomers than those of Rome, and specially charged by the Council of Nice to inform the Pope of the date of Easter of each year, discovered in this ancient cycle some errors of calculation, and after two centuries of disputes they succeeded in making the Roman Church adopt a new Paschal cycle, that which is now universally received, and which limits the celebration of Easter to the interval between the 22d of March and the 24th of April. The Celtic churches had no knowledge of this change, which dated from the year 525 — that is to say, from a time when the invasions of the Saxons probably intercepted their habitual communications with Rome: they retained their old Jewish cycle of eighty-four years, and adhered obstinately to it. They celebrated Easter always on Sunday, but this Sunday was not always the one which had been appointed by the Romish Church after the new calculations. Thus it happened that King Oswy was eight days in advance of his wife, and complained of having to rejoice alone in the resurrection of Christ, while the queen was still commemorating the commencement of the passion in the services for Palm Sunday.

On this diversity, then, which was in appearance so slight and trifling, turned the great dispute between the Celtic and Roman monks, between those who had first begun the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, and those who had so happily completed it. It is amazing to note the vehemence and the duration of a dispute so bitter on a subject so insignificant. Certainly there was something painful in being unable to persuade the new believers to celebrate the greatest festival of their religion on the same day; but, on the other hand, it is evident that all these Catholics must have been profoundly agreed as to the important questions of faith and practice, since they could attach so much weight to a difference of astronomical calculation.

Moderation of the Romish Church during all this struggle.

Let us at the same time remark that throughout this controversy the Roman Church displayed an exemplary moderation, and always acted in conformity with the paternal instructions given by St. Gregory the Great to St. Augustin. She did not impose upon Wilfrid the mission he had taken upon himself. It was not at Rome, but at Lyons, that he received that tonsure which the Romans themselves do not seem to have taken much pains about. Rome never treated as schismatics or heretics those Celtic dissidents, the most illustrious of whom,

Columbanus of Luxeuil and Aïdan of Lindisfarne, have always had a place in her martyrology. She never proceeded otherwise than by way of counsel and exhortation, without insisting on violent measures, and patiently awaiting the returning calm of excited spirits, giving to all an example of prudence, moderation, and charity.[34]

A competition for influence mingles with the ritualistic dispute.

On the other hand, it is clearly evident that under the veil of a question purely ritual, was hidden one of political and personal influence. The precocious greatness of Wilfrid and his ambitious fervor might well awaken hostility among the clergy and nobles of Northumbria; his pretensions, which seemed so many audacious innovations, were of a kind to wound a people but recently converted, and instinctively inclined to attach great importance to the external forms of the new faith. But it was above all a struggle of race and influence. On one side the Celtic spirit, proud, independent, and passionate, of which the great Abbot of Iona was the type, and of which his sons, the apostles of Northumbria, were the representatives; on the other, the spirit of Rome, the spirit of discipline and authority, imperfectly personified by its first envoys, Augustine and Paulinus, but endowed with a very different degree of vigor and missionary energy, since the moment when an Anglo-Saxon of the type of Wilfrid had constituted himself its champion. England was the stake of this game. All the future of that Christianity which had been so laboriously planted in the island, depended on its issue.

Parliament of Whitby. 664.

It is this which gives a truly historical interest to the famous conference of Whitby, convoked by King Oswy, for the purpose of regulating and terminating the dispute which troubled his kingdom and the neighboring countries. He desired that the question should be publicly debated in his presence, and in that of the *Witenagemot*, or parliament, composed not only of the principal ecclesiastics and laymen of the country, but of all those who had a right to sit in the national councils of the Anglo-

[34] "Der Römischer Stuhl benahm sich im ganzen auch hier mit der ihm eigenen umsichtigen Weisheit und Liberalität." This is the testimony rendered by the illustrious Döllinger in his excellent account of this controversy, *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, i. 2, 227. The learned historiographer of the Irish Church, Lanigan, professor of theology at Pavia, who wrote about 1828, quotes the excesses of the ultra-orthodox English converts, who would admit nothing to be good, or even tolerable, except what was practised at Rome, even in matters which the Romans themselves held of no importance, vol. iii. p. 68.

Composition of the assembly.

Saxons. It is to be remarked that here, for the first time in the history of these assemblies, a sort of division into two chambers like that which has become the fundamental principle of parliamentary institutions is visible. Bede states that the king consulted the nobles and the commoners, those who were seated and those who stood round, precisely like the lords and commons of our own days.[35]

The Celtic party.

The place chosen for the assembly was on the sea-coast, and in the centre of the two Northumbrian kingdoms, at Streaneshalch or Whitby, in the double monastery of monks and nuns governed by the illustrious Hilda, a princess of the Northumbrian blood-royal, who was now fifty years of age, and thus joined to the known sanctity of her life[36] maturity of age and experience sufficient for the government of souls. Although baptized by Bishop Paulinus at the time of the first Romish mission to the court of her grand-uncle King Edwin, she was completely devoted to Celtic traditions, doubtless from attachment to the sainted Bishop Aïdan, from whom she had received the veil. Her whole community were of the same party which had been hitherto favored by King Oswy, and was naturally represented by Colman, Bishop of Lindisfarne, at that time the only prelate in the vast kingdom of Northumbria. He, with all his Celtic clergy, attended the council, as well as Cedd, a monk of Lindisfarne, who had become Bishop of the East Saxons, among whom he had re-established the episcopal see of London, after the expulsion of the Romish missionaries. Bishop Cedd, Anglo-Saxon by birth, but educated in Ireland before he became a monk in the Hiberno-Scottish monastery of Lindisfarne,[37] was to act as interpreter in the conference between the Celts on one side and those who spoke only Latin or English on the other, and he acquitted himself of these functions with a most watchful impartiality.

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[35] "Hæc dicente rege, elevatis in cœlum manibus, faverunt adsidentes quique, sive adstantes, majores una cum mediocribus." — Bede. "Beisitzende und umstehende, Adel und Gemeine." — Lappenberg, p. 165. This reminds one of the famous passage of Tacitus: "De minoribus rebus principes consultant; de majoribus omnes: ita tamen, ut ea quoque quorum penes plebem arbitrium est, apud principes pertractentur." — *De Mor. Germ.*

[36] "Præsenti Sancta-Moniali piissima Hilda." Such is the testimony borne to her by Eddi, the biographer of Wilfrid, whose adversary she always was.

[37] At least this is to be supposed from the comparison of different passages of Bede (iii. 23, 28; iv. 3), on the youth of the two brother bishops, Cedd and Ceadda.

The side opposed to the Celts had at its head the young King Alchfrid and the Bishop Agilbert; the latter, though educated in Ireland, not having hesitated to embrace the cause of those Roman customs which prevailed in France, his native country. Wilfrid was the soul of the discussion he had so warmly desired, and its special orator: he appeared in the arena in all the glow of youth and talent, but supported by two venerable representatives of Roman missions to England — the priest Romanus, who had accompanied the Queen from Canterbury; and James, the aged, courageous, and modest deacon, sole relic and sole surviving witness of the first conversion of Northumbria under the father of Eanfleda, who had remained alone, after the flight of St. Paulinus, for nearly forty years, evangelizing Northumbria and observing Easter according to the Roman custom, with all those whom he had preserved or restored to the faith. The Roman party.

All being assembled, perhaps in one of the halls of the great monastery of St. Hilda, but more likely, from the great numbers, in the open air on the green platform which then, as now, surmounted the abrupt cliffs of Whitby, and from whence the eye wanders far over those waves which bore the Saxons to the shores of Great Britain; King Oswy opened the proceedings by saying that as they all served the same God and hoped for the same heaven, it was advisable that they should follow the same rule of life and the same observance of the holy sacraments, and that it would therefore be well to examine which was the true tradition they ought to follow. He then commanded his bishop, Colman, to speak first, to explain his ritual, and to justify its origin. "I have," said the Bishop of Lindisfarne, "received the Pascal usage which I follow from my predecessors who placed me here as bishop; all our fathers have observed the same custom; these fathers and their predecessors, evidently inspired by the Holy Ghost, as was Columba of the Cell, followed the example of John the apostle and evangelist, who was called the friend of our Lord We keep Easter as he did, as did Polycarp and all his disciples of old. In reverence for our ancestors we dare not, and we will not, change." [38] Then the king gave leave to Agilbert to speak, that he might describe the reasons of his The king opens the conference.

[38] "Patres nostri et antecessores eorum manifeste Spiritu Sancto inspirati, ut erat Columcille. . . . Nec hoc audemus pro patribus nostris, nec volumus mutare." — Eddius, c. 10.

different observance; but the poor bishop, remembering that he had lost his vast diocese of Wessex through his imperfect knowledge of Anglo-Saxon,[39] begged that his disciple Wilfrid might be allowed to speak in his place. "We think precisely alike," said Agilbert, "but he can better express our thoughts in English, than I could through an interpreter.[40] Then Wilfrid began, "We keep Easter as we have seen it kept by all Christians at Rome, where the blessed apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, lived, taught, suffered, and are buried. He had seen the same rule observed in Italy and in Gaul, where we have studied; we know that it is so in Africa, in Asia, in Egypt, in Greece, and throughout Christendom, in spite of all difference of language and of country. It is only the Picts and Britons who, occupying the two most remote islands of the ocean, nay, but a part even of those islands, foolishly persist in contradicting all the rest of the world." [41]

Colman replied, "It is strange that you speak of our traditions as absurd, when we only follow the example of the great apostle who was thought worthy to lay his head upon the breast of our Saviour, and whom the whole world has judged to be so wise." The dialogue then continued in a less excited manner. In this discussion the bishop displayed the natural haughtiness of his race, and the abbot that persuasive eloquence already so dear to the Anglo-Saxons, who were charmed to hear their own barbarous language spoken perfectly by a man cultivated and formed by the learning of Italy and Gaul. As for the question itself, both had recourse to extremely poor arguments. Wilfred quoted Scripture, where there is not a single word as to the Pascal cycle, and the decretals of the universal Church, of which only one relates to the matter, that of the Council of Nice, which contents itself with the decision that Easter should always be celebrated on Sunday, a particular which the Irish observed equally with the Romans. Instead of limiting himself to the statement that the rules established at Rome had been and ought to be adopted everywhere, he also affirmed that St.

[39] See above, page 286.

[40] "Loquatur, obsecro, vice mea discipulus meus Wilfridus presbyter; ille melius ipsa lingua Anglorum quam ego per interpretem." — Bede, iii. 25.

[41] "Præter hos tantum et obstinationis eorum complices, Pictos dico et Britones, cum quibus de duabus ultimis oceani insulis, et his non totis, contra totum orbem stulto labore pugnant. . . . Mirum quare stultum appellare velitis laborem nostrum." — Bede, l. c.

Peter had established the custom then followed at Rome, as if that custom had been always the same, and had not, in fact, been changed nearly a century before, to be brought into accordance with the best astronomical calculations. But Bishop Colman either knew nothing or understood nothing of this change, and was not able to cite it against his adversary. He perpetually recurred to the examples of St. John and the fathers of the Celtic Church, and with more vehemence still quoted Columba, whose life, so minutely described by the contemporaries of this very council of Whitby,[42] contains no trace of peculiar attachment to the Celtic Easter, but shows that he merely followed with simplicity the ancient usage transmitted by St. Patrick to the Irish monks. Nothing gives us reason to suppose that the great Abbot of Iona, if once informed of the universal prevalence of the Roman custom, would have been opposed to it.

"Can we admit," said Bishop Colman, "that our most venerable father Columba, and his successors, men beloved of God, have acted contrary to the Divine Word? Many of them have given proof of their sanctity by miracles; and as for me, who believe in that sanctity, I choose to follow forever their teaching and their example." Here Wilfrid had the better of the argument. "As to your father Columba and his disciples, with their miracles, I might answer that, at the day of judgment, many will say to our Lord, that they have done miracles in His name, and He will answer that He never knew them. But God keep me from speaking thus of your father! it is better, when one is ignorant, to believe good than evil. I do not therefore deny that they were servants of God, and beloved by Him: no doubt they loved Him in their rustic simplicity, with the most pious intentions. I do not think there was much harm in their observance of Easter, because no one had told them of more perfect rules. If a Catholic calculator had been presented to them, I believe they would have followed his counsel as they followed the commandments of God which they knew. But as for you, without doubt you sin, if, after having heard the decretals of the Apostolic See, and even of the universal Church, con-

[42] The first of these biographers, Cumin the White, was at that very time Abbot of Iona, from whence Colman came; and the second Adamnan, then a monk in Ireland, was already forty years old in 664. The latter does not mention the Pascal difference except to relate the prophecy of Columba during his visit to Clonmacnoise, "De illa quæ post dies multos ob diversitatem paschalis festi orta est inter Scotiæ ecclesias discordia." — Lib. i. c. 3.

firmed by Holy Scripture, you still despise them. Even admitting the sanctity of your fathers, how can you prefer, to the Church spread over the whole earth, this handful of saints in one corner of a remote island? Finally, for your Columba (and I would willingly say our Columba, so far as he was the servant of Christ), however holy or powerful by his virtues he may have been, can we place him before the chief of the apostles, to whom our Lord himself said — 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven'?"[43]

Close of the king's speech.

The Saxon king then addressed his bishop, "Is it true, Colman, that these words were said by our Lord to St. Peter?" "It is true, O king," was the answer. "Can you then," rejoined the king, "show me a similar authority given to your Columba?" "No," said the bishop. "You are then," continued the king, "both agreed that the keys of heaven were given to Peter by our Lord?" "Yes," answered the two adversaries together. "Then," said the king, "I say, like you, that he is the porter of heaven, and that I will not oppose him, but on the contrary, obey him in all things, lest when I reach the doors of the celestial kingdom, there be no one to open them for me if I am the adversary of him who carries the keys. In all my life I will neither do nor approve anything or any person that may be contrary to him."[44]

The assembly adopts the Romish usages.

The whole assembly approved this conclusion of the king by vote, holding up their hands, both the nobles who were seated, and the freemen who stood round,[45] and all decided to adopt the Roman

[43] "Justius multo est de incognitis bonum credere, quam malum; unde et illos Dei famulos et Dei dilectos esse non nego, qui simplicitate rustica, sed intentione pia Deum dilexerunt . . . quos utique credo, si quis tunc ad eos catholicus calculator advenerat. . . . Etsi enim patres tui sancti fuerint, numquid universali quæ per orbem est ecclesiæ Christi, eorum est paucitas uno de angulo extremæ insulæ præferenda. Etsi sanctus erat et potens virtutibus ille Columba vester, immo et noster si Christi erat." — Bede, iii. 25. The dubious and slightly disdainful tone used by the young Wilfrid in speaking of the great Columba, of whose life he was evidently ignorant, is remarkable. However, this speech is only found in Bede, himself singularly hostile to Columba. Eddi, the contemporary and companion of Wilfrid, attributes to him much more humble language, of which he quotes little. Fleury, relating this scene, believes that he spoke against St. Columbanus of Luxeuil.

[44] "Ille est ostiarius et clavicularius, contra quem concluctationem controversiæ et judiciorum ejus in vita mea non facio, nec facientibus consentio." — Eddius, c. 10. Cf. Bede, l. c.

[45] "Hæc dicente rege, elevatis in cœlum manibus, faverunt adsidentes quique, sive adstantes." — Bede.

custom. The sitting ended without any discussion of the other contested points, which, no doubt, were regarded as settled by the first decision. Of the three bishops who had taken part in the deliberation, Agilbert, ex-Bishop of the Western Saxons, embarked for his own country, and Cedd, Bishop of the East Saxons, who had acted as interpreter to the two adverse parties, renounced the customs of Lindisfarne, in which he had been educated, and returned to his diocese of London to spread the Roman usages there.

Bishop Colman protests, abdicates, and returns to Iona.

But Colman, Bishop of the Northern Anglo-Saxons, refused to recognize the decision of the council. He could not resign himself to see his doctrine despised, and his spiritual ancestors depreciated; he feared, also, the anger of his countrymen, who would not have pardoned his defection.[46] Notwithstanding the affection and veneration showed for him by King Oswy, he determined to abandon his diocese. Accordingly, taking with him all the Lindisfarne monks of Scottish origin, who would neither give up the Celtic Easter nor shave their heads in Roman fashion, he left Northumbria forever, and went to Iona to consult the fathers of the order, or family of St. Columba. He carried with him the bones of his predecessor St. Aïdan, the founder of Lindisfarne, and first Celtic evangelist of Northumbria, as if the ungrateful land had become unworthy to possess these relics of a betrayed saint, and witnesses of a despised apostleship. Undoubtedly this holy bishop, whose virtues, like those of his predecessors, draw, in this supreme hour, an eloquent and generous homage from the venerable Bede, would have done better to have yielded and remained in his diocese conforming to the customs of Rome. But what heart is so cold as not to understand, to sympathize, and to journey with him along the Northumbrian coast and over the Scottish mountains, where, bearing homewards the bones to his father, the proud but vanquished spirit returned to his northern mists, and buried in the sacred isle of Iona his defeat and his unconquerable fidelity to the traditions of his race?

[46] "Propter timorem patriæ suæ." — Eddius, l. c. "Videns spretam suam doctrinam, sectamque esse despectam." — Bede, iii. 26. Cf. iv. 4.

CHAPTER II.

WILFRID, BISHOP OF YORK, AND THE GREEK MONK THEODORE, PRIMATE OF ENGLAND.

Colman founds a half-Saxon, half-Celtic monastic colony in Ireland. — He is succeeded in Northumbria by the Anglo-Saxon Eata as prior of Lindisfarne, and by Tuda, an Irishman converted to the Romish ritual, as bishop. — Dedication of the great Monastery of Peterborough, founded by the Christian descendants of Penda, the last Pagan leader; at which Mercians and Northumbrians, Celts and Romanists, are present together; speech of King Wulphere. — Pestilence of 664; death of Tuda; Wilfrid elected Bishop of Northumbria. — Treating the Anglo-Saxon bishops as schismatics, he goes to be consecrated by the Bishop of Paris at Compiègne, and removes his see from Lindisfarne to York. — On his return he is shipwrecked on the coast of Sussex, and fights with the natives. — Celtic reaction against Wilfrid; King Oswy replaces him during his absence by an Irish abbot, Ceadda. — Sanctity and popularity of Ceadda. — The Northumbrians observe the decree of Whitby as to the celebration of Easter, but refuse to retain Wilfrid as bishop. — He retires to his Monastery of Ripon. — He resides with the Kings of Mercia and of Kent. — He assists the holy Queen Ermenilda in completing the conversion of the Mercians. — He introduces the Gregorian chant and the Benedictine rule into Northumbria. — The Kings of Kent and Northumbria leave to the Pope the choice of the new metropolitan of Canterbury. — The Pope chooses a Greek monk Theodore, and associates with him Adrian, an African, and the Anglo-Saxon Benedict Biscop. — They are all three seized on their way by Ebroïn, but released. — The pontificate of St. Theodore, the first metropolitan recognized by all England. — He re-establishes Wilfrid in the see of York, who makes Ceadda bishop of the Mercians. — Holy and peaceful death of Ceadda. — Theodore and Adrian visit all England. — Theodore's ecclesiastical legislation; his book of penance. — He consecrates the Celtic Cathedral of Lindisfarne. — He creates the parochial system as it now exists, and holds the first Anglo-Saxon council at Hertford. — He fails in increasing the number of bishoprics, but introduces the Benedictine order into the monasteries. — Literary development of the English monasteries due to Theodore and Adrian. — The Church of England is constituted, and the English nation becomes a lever in the hands of the Papacy.

Colman founds a monastic colony in Ireland.

It was not only the priests of Celtic origin, Irish or Scotch, who refused to sanction by their presence the introduction of Roman practices at Lindisfarne; Colman was also accompanied by thirty

Anglo-Saxon monks, perfectly versed in the study and offices of monastic life, who preferred the Celtic observances to those of Rome. After a short sojourn at Iona, he led these emigrants to his native country, and established himself with them in a desert island on the west coast of Ireland called *Innisbowen*, or the Isle of the White Heifer, a name it still retains. But when confined in this islet, beaten by the waves of the great ocean, the Anglo-Saxons, whose devotion to Celtic tradition had been strong enough to sever them from their country, were unable to live amicably with the Irish, their former companions at Lindisfarne. They quarrelled about a purely material matter, which manifests even thus early the natural incompatibility of the two races who were destined afterwards upon Irish soil to fight more cruel battles. The Irish monks wandered all the summer through about their favorite spots, probably in many instances their native places; but on their return in winter they expected to share the harvest which their English brethren had painfully cultivated and gathered in.[47] Colman was obliged to separate them; leaving the Irish in their island, he installed the Anglo-Saxons in a monastery which, under the name of Mayo, flourished greatly, and which a century later still continued to be occupied by English monks, fervent and laborious, who had, however, returned from Celtic usages to the orthodox rule, and probably to Benedictine discipline, which Wilfrid had established at the same time as he introduced conformity to the usages of Rome.

The new prelates in Northumbria.

Colman, however, while withdrawing from Lindisfarne all his Celtic countrymen, and those of the Anglo-Saxons who sympathized with them, had no intention of handing over definitely to the enemy the sacred isle in which his predecessors had delighted to recognize a new Iona. Before setting out on his voluntary exile, he begged his friend King Oswy to allow the remaining monks at Lindisfarne to take for their superior that Eata whom Aïdan had chosen among his twelve first Northumbrian disciples, and who, out of love to Celtic traditions,

[47] "Eo quod Scotti tempore æstatis quo fruges erant colligendæ, relicto monasterio, per nota sibi loca dispersi vagarentur; ut vero hieme succedente redirent, et his quæ Angli præparaverant, communiter uti desiderarent." — Bede, iv. 4. Is not this precisely the fable of the Grasshopper and the Ant? and is it not curious to discover, in a hidden corner of monkish history, a fresh proof of the radical difference and fatal incompatibility of the two races, Celtic and Saxon? This intractable Bishop Colman died in 674 or 676; he is reckoned among the saints of the Irish martyrology.

had given up the monastery at Ripon, in which Wilfrid succeeded him, and had again become abbot of Melrose — that is to say, of the novitiate establishment of the Celtic monks in Northumbria. The king consented, and the confidant and friend of Colman became superior of Lindisfarne, with the title of prior, but the full authority of an abbot.

After this it became necessary to proceed immediately to replace Colman as bishop of all Northumbria. His successor was one of his own countrymen, who resided in the diocese, and, indeed, during the pontificate of Colman, had been famed for his virtues and apostolical activity. This monk, named Tuda, had been educated in the monasteries of southern Ireland; he had already conformed to the Roman ritual in the questions of the celebration of Easter and the form of the tonsure — these customs having been, it is said, adopted thirty years before by the district of Ireland to which he belonged. It was only, therefore, by his Celtic origin, that he was attached to the ancient traditions of the diocese. He died some months afterwards of a terrible pestilence, which in this year, 664, made cruel ravages in the British Isles. He was the last of the Celtic bishops of Northumbria.[48]

Before his death, however, there occurred a great religious and national solemnity, at which he was present, and which was celebrated in this same critical year of 664, so decisive, under more than one aspect, for England. This solemnity seems to have united in sincere and unanimous enthusiasm all the principal personages of the most important states of the Heptarchy, and it exhibits, in a special degree, the increasing ascendency of that Roman influence of which Wilfrid was henceforward the victorious champion. Its object was the dedication of a new monastery in Mercia, the kingdom which had been so long the stronghold of Saxon paganism and the seat of an obstinate resistance to the missionary spirit of Northumbria.

Conversion to Christianity of the descendants of Penda.

By one of those transformations so frequent among the Germanic races at the period of their entrance into the Christian life, all the descendants of the fierce Penda, the most obstinate and invincible of pagans, were destined to become intrepid champions of Christianity, or models of monastic life.

[48] "Famulus Christi Tuda qui erat apud Scottos austrinos eruditus, atque ordinatus episcopus, habens juxta morem provinciæ illius coronam tonsuræ ecclesiasticæ et catholicam temporis paschalis regulam observans." — Bede, iii. 26.

Of his eight children who are known to us, three sons who reigned successively distinguished themselves by their religious zeal, the third becoming a monk after a reign of thirty years; while three daughters, two of whom are counted among the saints of the English calendar, ended their lives in the cloister. The eldest son, Peada, who was son-in-law of Oswy, brother-in-law and friend of Alchfrid, and the earliest Christian of Mercia, continued to reign over one part of the kingdom, even after the defeat and death of his father, who perished under the avenging sword of Oswy. The father-in-law and son-in-law, united more closely by their faith than the father and son had been by the ties of blood, determined to consecrate their alliance by founding a great monastery in honor of God and St. Peter, and chose for this purpose a retired situation in the east of Mercia.

Foundation of Peterborough.

Such was the origin of the Abbey of Peterborough, the burgh or castle of St. Peter,[49] the most ancient of those famous houses destined to rise successively in the midst of the vast fens which formed a sort of natural frontier between the eastern and central Saxons, between Mercia and East Anglia.

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Peada died a violent death when the work was but beginning.[50] But it was taken up, and continued by his young brother Wulphere, whom the Mercians, in revolt from Northumbrian domination, had chosen for their chief, who had been, like his elder brother, baptized by the second Celtic bishop of Lindisfarne,[51] and who always showed an ardent zeal for the extension and consolidation of Christianity in his kingdom. His younger brothers and his two sisters, one of them the wife of the young King Alchfrid of Northumbria, the friend of Peada and Wilfrid, and all the *witan* — that is to say, the wise men and nobles, whether lay or ecclesiastical, of his public council[52] — encouraged him to the utmost in finishing the first great monastic foundation in their vast territory.

Solemn dedication of Peter-

The abbot appointed from the beginning of the work was a monk named Sexwulf, descended from

[49] It was at first called Medehamstede, which means *the house in the meadow*.

[50] By the treachery of his wife, daughter of Oswy, and sister of his friend Alchfrid, who, having married Peada's sister, was doubly his brother-in-law. — Bede, iii. 24. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ad an. 665.

[51] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. ii. February, p. 689.

[52] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:* Gibson's ed., Latin-Saxon text, p. 34; Giles's ed., English text, p. 321.

borough. 664. a great and noble family, devoted to the service of God, and much beloved by the Mercian Saxons. King Wulphere enjoined him to spare nothing to complete his brother's work magnificently, promising to be answerable for all the expense. When the building was finished the King of Mercia invited, for the day of consecration, the King of Northumbria, who was his godfather although he had become his political adversary, and whose dignity of Bretwalda entitled him to preside at the grand solemnities of the Saxon people; and with him the two kings of the neighboring states of Essex and East Anglia, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of Rochester,[53] who were the first Anglo-Saxon monks raised to the episcopate; Wini, who had taken the place of Agilbert as Bishop of the Saxons of the West;[54] the two bishops of Mercia and Northumbria,[55] both educated in Celtic monasteries; and, last of all, Wilfrid, on whom all eyes had been turned by his late victories. Around these distinguished guests, both lay and ecclesiastical, were ranged all the earls and thanes, or great landed proprietors of the kingdom.[56] It was therefore really a great political assembly as well as a religious one. When the Archbishop had ended the ceremony of dedication, and consecrated the monastery to St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Andrew, King Wulphere, placing himself in the midst of his family and his nobles, spoke thus: — "Thanks be to the most high and almighty God for the good deed which I do to-day in honor of Christ and St. Peter! All, as many as are here present, be witnesses and sureties of the donation which I make to St. Peter, to the Abbot Sexwulf and his monks, of the land and water, the fens and brooks here mentioned. . . . It is a trifling gift; but I will that they hold and possess it so royally and freely that no impost may be levied upon it, and that the monastery may be subject to no other power on earth, except the Holy See of Rome, for it is hither that those of us who cannot go to Rome will come to seek and to visit St. Peter. I implore you, my brother, and you, my sisters, be witnesses

[53] Frithona and Ithamar.

[54] He was soon expelled from this usurped diocese; but thanks to the protection of Wulphere, he became Bishop of London, purchasing the see, according to Bede, who does not explain how the King of Mercia could dispose of the bishopric of the East Saxons. — *Eccles. Hist.*, iii. 7, 28. Lappenberg concludes that Wulphere became Bretwalda after the death of Oswy.

[55] Jaruman and Tuda.

[56] "Et ibi fuerunt omnes illius thani quotquot essent in suo regno. . . . Cum comitibus, cum ducibus, et cum thanis." — *Chron. Anglo-Sax.*, p. 35. Cf. Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops*, t. i. p. 131.

to this for the good of your souls, and sign it with your hands. I implore those who shall succeed me, whether my sons, my brothers, or others, to maintain this donation, as they wish to obtain eternal life, and to escape eternal torment. Whoever shall take away from it, or add to it, may the keeper of the celestial gates take away from, or add to, his part in heaven." The four kings, the five bishops, the two brothers and two sisters of the king, the earls and lords, successively signed the act of donation with the sign of the cross, repeating this formula, "I confirm it by my mouth and by the cross of Christ."[57] The document which contained the donation having been drawn up in accordance with the royal speech, the four kings and two princesses signed it first, then the bishops, and after them Wilfrid, who describes himself on this occasion as a "priest, servant of the Churches, and bearer of the Gospel among the nations."[58]

Immediately following upon these events, came a terrible pestilence, which ravaged England, and chose its most illustrious victims among those prelates of whom we have been speaking. It carried off first Bishop Cedda, who had acted as interpreter at Whitby, and his thirty friends, of whose touching death at Lastingham we have already heard;[59] and after him the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Northumbria, both of whom had signed the deed of dedication of the new monastery of St. Peter.[60] It became necessary, therefore, to provide for the see which the death of Tuda had left vacant, that of Northumbria, the largest and most important of all the English bishoprics. The Roman party believed itself so strong as to be able to disregard the tradition, not yet very venerable, which made that great see the right of the Celtic monks. They determined to go further back, to the recol-

Wilfrid is promoted to the bishopric. 664.

[57] All these details are taken from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the most important and most authentic of all the historic monuments of the Anglo-Saxon epoch, after the History of Bede. Kemble, and after him several recent authors, see only modern interpolations in these passages relating to the Abbey of Peterborough, but give no direct proof of this opinion. Kemble, however, describes the consent of the assembly, half lay and half clerical, to the king's donation. (*Codex Diplomat.*, nº 984.) M. Augustin Thierry has quoted the speech of Wulphere as authentic (*Hist. de la Conquête*, t. i. p. 88, edit. of 1846), and I do not see any reason for not following his example. The most complete version of the deed is in Dugdale's *Monasticon* (vol. i. p. 63). There will be found in the Appendix some notes on the present condition of this famous abbey.

[58] "Ego Wilfridus presbyter, famulus ecclesiarum, et bajulus evangelii Dei in gentes, affectavi."

[59] Page 290.

[60] Bede, iii. 25, 28, &c.

lections of the first mission sent from Rome, which, passing by Canterbury, was established at York by the Benedictine Paulinus. Besides this, the young king, Alchfrid, was impatient to see his friend Wilfrid master of spiritual authority in the kingdom which had been brought back by him to unity with Rome. He obtained the consent of his father, the Bretwalda Oswy, and both together reassembled the Witenagemot, to proceed to the election of a bishop, whose determination it should be to make Roman usages the law of his conduct. The Northumbrian thanes, consulted by the two kings, replied with one voice that no one in the whole country could be more worthy of the episcopate than Wilfrid, who was already priest and abbot. He himself was present at the assembly, and wished at first to decline the election. But he was commanded in the name of the Lord, and on the part of the kings and people of Northumbria, to submit his will to their unanimous choice.[61]

This was a great victory for the Roman observances. It was never forgiven by the vanquished, and Wilfrid had to bear the penalty during all the remainder of his life. The Northumbrian dissenters submitted to the decision of Whitby, but they retained an implacable antipathy to the conqueror. The great Abbess Hilda, the Celtic monks of Lindisfarne, all those who remained faithful to the sacred memory of St. Aïdan, and to that still more venerated, of Columba, appeared to have taken against Wilfrid the oath of Hannibal. Reduced to powerlessness on the Pascal question, in respect to which they could not struggle against Rome with the whole Church at her back, they regained the advantage when only the person of Wilfrid was concerned, who, dear as he was to the king's son, was perhaps for that very reason less liked by Oswy, who, though he adopted the Roman Easter, could not destroy all traces of attachment to the ideas and customs of his youth.

He does not wish to be consecrated

Wilfrid, meantime, chose this occasion to exhibit, yet more than at Whitby, the bigoted and exclusive side of his character. He would not be consecrated by any of the bishops of his own country, not even by the

[61] "Reges concilium cum sapientibus suæ gentis . . . inierunt. quem eligerent in sedem vacantem, qui voluisset sedis apostolicæ doctrinam sibi facere et alios docere. . . . Neminem habemus meliorem et digniorem nostræ gentis quam Wilfridum . . . consenserunt reges et omnis populus huic electioni, et Wilfridum omnis conventus in nomine Domini accipere gradum episcopalem præcepit." — Eddius, c. 2.

Metropolitan of Canterbury. Although they were all in communion with the Holy See, and though many of them are still venerated as saints,[62] he took upon himself, on his own authority, to class them with schismatics. "My lord kings," he said, "I must first of all consider the best means of reaching the episcopate according to your election, without exposing myself to the reproaches of true Catholics. There are in this island many bishops whom it is not my business to accuse, but they have ordained Britons and Scots whom the Apostolic See has not received into communion, because it does not receive those that hold communion with schismatics.[63] I therefore humbly beseech you to send me into Gaul, where there are many Catholic bishops, so that I may receive the episcopal character without opposition to the Holy See." He thus confounded together the whole Celtic clergy of Great Britain and Ireland as schismatics, though his apologists have not left us the least trace of any Papal decision which authorized him in taking this attitude. However, the two kings made no objection, but, on the contrary, gave him a numerous train and enough money to present himself to the Franks with the pomp he loved, and which suited the bishop of a great kingdom. He thus crossed the sea and went to Compiègne to seek his friend Agilbert, formerly Bishop of the West Saxons, who had just been made Bishop of Paris. Agilbert received him with all honor as a confessor of the faith. Wilfrid was consecrated with the greatest solemnity, and with the assistance of twelve other bishops. He was carried through the church, in the midst of the crowd, on a golden throne, by the hands of bishops, who chanted hymns, and who were alone admitted to the honor of supporting his throne. He was instituted Bishop, not of Lindisfarne, like his four predecessors, but of York, like Paulinus, the first bishop sent from Canterbury and from Rome, as if by this means to efface all trace of the Celtic mission in Northumbria.[64]

consecrated by any English bishop.

[62] Faber, p. 44.

[63] At least this seems to be the meaning of the somewhat obscure language his friend Eddi attributes to him: "O domini venerabiles reges. . . . Sunt hic in Britannia multi episcopi, quorum nullum meum est accusare: quamvis veraciter sciam quod haud quatuordecim anni sunt, ut Britones et Scoti ab illis sint ordinati, quos nec apostolica sedes in communionem recepit, neque eos qui schismaticis consentiunt." — C. 12.

[64] "Tale consilium bene regibus complacuit, præparantes ei navem et auxilia hominum et multitudinem pecuniæ. . . . In sella aurea sedentem more eorum sursum elevarunt, portantes in manibus soli episcopi intra oratoria, nullo alio attingente. . . . Post spatium temporis ad sedem episcopalem

Shipwreck and combat on the coast of Sussex.

His stay in France was probably too much prolonged, and his return was not without disaster. While he was crossing the Channel, and the clergy who accompanied him, seated on deck, replaced the ordinary songs of the sailors by chanted psalms, a fearful storm arose, by which they were wrecked on the coast of Sussex — the smallest kingdom of the Heptarchy, inhabited, as its name indicates, by the Southern Saxons. The ebbing tide having left the ship aground, the people in the neighborhood made a rush to avail themselves of that right to wreck and derelict always so dear to maritime populations, and which has been too long maintained even among the most Catholic, as in our own Bretagne. As the Southern Saxons were still pagans, we can scarcely admit, with one of Wilfrid's biographers, that they were excited against him by the malice of Celtic Christianity; but they did not the less manifest their intention of taking possession of the vessel, and giving the shipwrecked strangers their choice between death and slavery. Wilfrid tried to pacify them, offering all he possessed for the liberty of himself and his followers. But the pagans were excited by one of their priests, who, standing on the cliffs, cursed, like Balaam, the people of God, and looked as if he meant to destroy them by sorcery. One of Wilfrid's followers, armed, like David, with a sling, flung a stone at the heathen pontiff, whose skull it shattered; and his corpse fell upon the sands. At this sight the rage of the savages redoubled, and they prepared to take the vessel by storm. Wilfrid's Northumbrians, one hundred and twenty in number, resolved to defend themselves. They swore, according to Saxon custom, not to abandon each other, and to think of no alternative save a glorious death or victory. Wilfrid and his priests, kneeling on the deck, prayed while the others fought. Three times the ferocious wreckers mounted to the assault, and three times they were repulsed. They were preparing for a fourth attack, under the command of their king, who had been attracted by the hope of booty, when the tide suddenly turned, lifted the stranded vessel, and saved the travellers from their enemies. They landed peaceably at Sandwich, on the same Kentish coast where Augustin and his companions had for the first time trodden the coast of England.[65]

Ebracæ civitatis hunc emiserunt." — EDDIUS, 1. c. Cf. BEDE, iii. 28; FRIDEGODUS, *Vita Rhythmica*, c. 11.

[65] "Canentibus clericis et psallentibus laudem Dei pro celeusmate in choro. . . . Mare navem et homines relinquens . . . littora detergens, in abyssi

A painful surprise awaited them. During the prolonged absence of Wilfrid the mind of Oswy had changed. The victory of Whitby, like all other victories, was less complete than it at first seemed to be. The Celtic party, apparently destroyed by the unanimous vote of the assembly, had now revived, and regained its credit with the Bretwalda. The return of Oswy to his former predilections for the Celtic Church, in which he had been baptized and brought up, may probably be ascribed to the influence of the holy Abbess Hilda of Whitby, princess of the Northumbrian blood-royal, to whom the king had confided his daughter when consecrating her to God as the price of his victory over the Mercians and the completed liberation of his country.[66] As long as she lived Hilda remained faithful to the Celtic traditions, and her opposition to Wilfrid never relaxed.[67] It has also been supposed that Oswy had begun to be jealous of his son Alchfrid, and of the influence procured for him with the Roman party by his close alliance with Wilfrid, although it was Oswy himself who had associated his son with him in the royalty, and although his position as Bretwalda or suzerain of the Anglo-Saxon Confederation might have reassured him on that score.[68] But the confidant and biographer of Wilfrid affirms that the Celts (whom he most unjustly styles quartodecimans), with the aid of the devil, persuaded the king to take advantage of the absence of Wilfrid to appoint one of their party Bishop of York in his place.[69]

Celtic reaction against Wilfrid. King Oswy replaces him by the Irishman Ceadda.

It is unanimously allowed that the man whom Oswy substituted for Wilfrid was a saint. His name was Ceadda,[70] a monk of Anglo-Saxon birth, but

Saintly character of Ceadda, the

matricem recessit. . . . Stans princeps sacerdotum idololatriæ coram paganis in tumulo excelso, sicut Balaam . . . ut suis magicis artibus manus eorum alligare nitebatur . . . retrorsum cadavere cadente sicut Goliathus in arenosis locis. . . . Inito pactu, ut nullus ab alio in fugam terga verteret, sed aut mortem cum laude, aut vitam cum triumpho habere mererentur." — EDDIUS, c. 13.

[66] See above, p. 297.

[67] VARIS, account already quoted. WILLIAM OF MALMESBURY, l. c.

[68] FABER, p. 46. A trace of this rivalry between father and son is clearly shown in this passage of Bede: — "Rex Alchfrid misit Wilfridum ad regem Galliarum, qui eum consecrari faceret episcopum. . . . Imitatus industriam filii rex Osviu misit Cantiam, virum sanctum." — iii. 28.

[69] "Oswiu rex, male suadente invidia, hostis antiqui instinctu, alium præarripere inordinate sedem suam edoctus, consensit ab his qui quartadecimanam partem contra apostolicæ sedis regulam sibi elegerunt." — EDDIUS, c. 14.

[70] He is venerated in England under the name of St. Chad. "Religiosissimum admirabilem doctorem, de insula Hibernia venientem." — EDDIUS, c. 14. BEDE, iii. 21, 23; iv. 2.

intruded successor of Wilfrid.

who had been a disciple of St. Aïdan. He was a brother of Bishop Cedd or Cedda, who had acted as interpreter at Whitby, and whose death, followed by that of his thirty friends, we have already mentioned. Ceadda had succeeded his brother as Abbot of Lastingham, the monastery which was, after Lindisfarne, the principal seat of the Celtic spirit in Northumbria. It was Oswy's desire, however, that the new bishop should be consecrated, not by the prelates of the Celtic ritual, but at Canterbury by the Saxon metropolitan,[71] who had always preserved a good understanding with the people of the north. But when Ceadda arrived at Canterbury he found that the terrible pestilence of 664 had carried off the archbishop, whose successor was not yet appointed. He then went to the land of the Eastern Saxons to obtain consecration from Wini, of whom we have heard at Whitby and Peterborough, but who also appears to have been moved by a reactionary impulse against the vote of the Council, since he called to his aid, in the consecration of Ceadda, two British bishops who had remained faithful to the Pascal usage of the Celts.[72] On his return to Northumbria, Ceadda peaceably took possession of his diocese, and displayed there the virtues which have for so long made his name popular among the English. Well versed in Holy Scripture, he drew from it rules of conduct which he never disregarded. His humility, his sincerity, the purity of his life, his love for study, excited the admiration of the Northumbrian people, to whose evangelization he devoted himself, visiting the cities, villages, and castles, nay, even the most retired hamlets, not on horseback, according to the favorite custom of the Saxons, but on foot, like the apostles, and like his master and predecessor St. Aïdan.[73]

It does not appear, however, that Ceadda or any other of the Celtic adversaries of Wilfrid attempted to reverse the decision of the Council of Whitby, or to maintain or re-establish either the Celtic observance of Easter or the tonsure from ear to ear. It is probable that the opposition which arose against Wilfrid, continually increasing in violence, was directed less against Roman doctrines or practices than against himself personally. His precocious influence, and

[71] Frithona, also called Deusdedit.

[72] "Absumptis in societatem ordinationis duobus de Britonum gente episcopis, qui dominicum paschæ diem . . . secus morem canonicum, a quarta decima usque ad vigesimam lunam celebrant." — Bede, iii. 28.

[73] "Oppida, rura, casas, vicos, castella propter evangelizandum, non equitando . . . peragrare." — Bede, iii. 28.

still more his violent proceedings against the Irish and their disciples, roused the popular dislike; for it is proved that, wherever he had the power, he allowed the Celts only the choice of giving up their own customs or returning to their native country.[74]

Wilfrid retires to the Monastery of Ripon.

Thus dispossessed of his see, Wilfrid regained all his influence by the moderation and dignity of his conduct. He was only thirty years of age. His youth might have excused some irritation, some warmth easy to be understood in the presence of so manifest an injustice. But far from yielding to this, he displayed the prudence and mature mind of a statesman, together with the humility and charity of a saint. He, so rigid an observer of the canon law, so scrupulous with regard to liturgical irregularities, had here to oppose an inexcusable abuse of power, a direct violation of the laws of the Church — he had to vindicate an evident right, solemnly conferred by the Northumbrian king and nation, and solemnly consecrated by the Church. And yet he preferred to be silent, to withdraw himself, and to trust to the justice of God and of the future. Thus the saint begins to be visible in his character; and it must not be forgotten, as an additional claim upon our interest, that the pious usurper of the see was himself already accounted a saint, and placed by public veneration in the high rank which he has for nine hundred years maintained in the regard of English Catholics.

He stays with the Kings of Mercia and Kent.

Wilfrid, whose episcopal character no one could despise, but who had no longer a diocese, retired calmly, and even joyfully, to the Monastery of Ripon, which he held by the generosity of the young King Alchfrid, and there lived in study and seclusion.[75] It may be supposed that his friend Alchfrid went thither to console him — if, indeed, he were living at the time of Wilfrid's return; for from that moment he disappears from history, though there is no record of his death. But Wilfrid was not long permitted to remain in his monastery. Wulphere, King

[74] "Ipse perplura catholicæ observationis moderamina ecclesiis Anglorum sua doctrina contulit. Unde factum est, ut, crescente per dies institutione catholica, Scotti omnes qui inter Anglos morabantur aut his manus darent, aut suam redirent ad patriam." — BEDE, iii. 28. "Hic primus verum pascha, ejectis Scottis, in Northumbria docuit." — THOM. DE ELMHAM., *Hist. Monast. S. Augustini*, p. 198.

[75] "Placido vultu et hilari pectore cœnobium suum in Ripon repetiit, ibi que cum magna mentis stabilitate." — RICARD. HAGULSTAD., *Hist Eccles. Hagust.*, c. 6.

of Mercia, the founder of Peterborough, invited him to his kingdom, where at that time there was no bishop.[76]

Although this kingdom had been converted and governed by Celtic monks, Wulphere was naturally drawn to favor the champion of the Roman ritual, by his marriage with Ermenilda, daughter of the King of Kent, and, consequently, sprung from that race which first received the teachings of Rome from the lips of St. Augustin. She was niece of Eanfleda, Queen of Northumbria, who had been the first protectress of Wilfrid, and who had carried back from her exile and education at Canterbury so faithful an attachment to the Roman customs. King Wulphere, Queen Ermenilda, and the Abbot Wilfrid, therefore labored together to extend and consolidate the Christian faith, in that vast kingdom of Mercia, which already began to rival Northumbria in importance.

St. Ermenilda, Queen of Mercia, afterwards abbess of Ely.

Thanks to the great territorial donations made to him by the king, Wilfrid was able to found several monasteries, in one of which he was destined to end his life. He thus lent powerful aid in achieving the happy results which were chiefly due to Queen Ermenilda. This gentle and noble woman, who, like so many other princesses of the race of Hengist, ended her days in the cloister, and is inscribed in the list of saints, had been chosen by God to complete the transformation into Christians of those terrible Mercians, who, more than all the other Anglo-Saxons, had remained faithful to their national paganism, and had been so long the terror of the new-born Christianity of England. She succeeded as much by her bounties and good example, as by her energetic perseverance. The unwearied activity of her self-devotion was only equalled by her angelic sweetness. She never ceased her exertions until, after a reign of seventeen years with Wulphere, idolatry had completely disappeared from Mercia. Then, on the death of her husband, she entered the monastery, where her mother awaited her, and which had been founded by her aunt.[77]

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[76] Bishop Jaruman had been sent by Wulphere to lead back to the true faith the Eastern Saxons, who, since the great pestilence of 664, had fallen into idolatry. See above, p. 291.

[77] "Sua dulcedine, blandifluis hortamentis, moribus ac beneficiis indomita mulcens pectora, ad suave Christi jugum rudes populos et indoctos excitabat. . . . Nec requievit invicta, donec idola et ritus dæmoniacos extirparet. . . . *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. ii. Feb., p. 691. The history of the Monastery of Ely, founded by St. Etheldreda, and of which Ermenilda succeeded her mother, Sexburga, as abbess, will be found further on.

In order to understand clearly the aspect of these earliest ages of the political and religious history of England, it is needful to remember the ties of blood which united all the kings and princesses of different dynasties who governed the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and claimed their descent from Odin. This relationship frequently serves to guide us through the maze of incidents which favored or retarded the preaching of the Gospel. Thus the gentle and noble Ermenilda was the sister of Egbert, King of Kent, who, faithful, like her, to the traditions of his family, always showed himself full of zeal for religion such as Augustin had preached it to his ancestor Ethelbert, and full of affection for Wilfrid. Accordingly, after the death of Augustin's fifth successor, the metropolitan see having remained vacant for some years, Egbert invited the Abbot of Ripon to preside over the spiritual government of his kingdom, and to provide for the ordinations.

Egbert, King of Kent. 664-673.

Wilfrid exercised this provisional authority for three years; dividing his time between his Northumbrian monastery, and the diocese of Canterbury, where he made many friends, whose aid he secured for the benefit of his Abbey of Ripon. One of his first acts was to bring to Ripon two monks of the monastery of St. Augustin, good musicians, who introduced among the Anglo-Saxons the Gregorian chant, always used at Canterbury; and it is to one of these, named Hedd, or Eddi, that we owe the extremely valuable and curious biography of his bishop. With these singers Wilfrid brought also masons, or rather architects, *cæmentarii*, and other artists or workmen, all, no doubt, monks of the same monastery, whose talents he proposed to employ in the great building of which he already dreamed. Finally, he brought from the first sanctuary created by the Benedictines in England, a gift yet more precious and more fruitful than music or architecture, the rule of St. Benedict, which no one had hitherto attempted to introduce into the Northumbrian monasteries.[78] Wilfrid constituted himself its ardent and zealous missionary, advancing its adoption side by side with that

666-669.

Wilfrid introduces the Gregorian music and the Benedictine rule into Northumbria.

[78] "Cum cantatoribus Ædde et Æona et cæmentariis omnisque pæne artis ministerio in regionem suam revertens cum regula Benedicti, instituta ecclesiarum bene melioravit." — Eddius, c. 14. "Nonne ego curavi . . . quomodo vitam monachorum secundum regulam S. Benedicti patris, quam nullus ibi prius invexit, constituerem?" — *Ibid.*, c. 45. Cf. Mabillon, *Act. SS. O S. B.*, t. v. p. 633, puis *Annales Benedictini*, lib. xv. n. 64.

of the Roman tonsure, the exact observance of Easter, and the harmonious and alternate chanting of the liturgy. He succeeded thoroughly; for it is to him and to him alone that we must attribute the gradual but rapid substitution of the Benedictine rule for Celtic traditions in the great and numerous communities which the sons of St. Columba had created in the north of England. It has been already made apparent in the life of St. Columba, that there was no fundamental difference between monastic life as regulated by the great legislator of Monte Cassino, and that practised at Iona and in the other communities of Ireland and Great Britain. The only difference that can be indicated as distinctly characteristic of monastic life among the Celts, is a certain increased austerity in fasts and other mortifications, and a more decided application to the copying of manuscripts.[79] But in the opinion of Wilfrid, as in the general interest of the Church, it was of great consequence that the powerful regular army of Saxon Christianity should march under the same flag, and answer to the same watchword. The watchword and the flag had been brought from Rome by the Benedictine missionaries of Mont-Cœlius, and confided to the two great monastic foundations of Canterbury, from whence Wilfrid brought them to make of them the supreme, and henceforward ineffaceable, characteristics of English ecclesiastical organization.

Choice of a new metropolitan.

However, the aspect of affairs was about to undergo another change. It was needful to find a successor for Archbishop Deusdedit. For this purpose, the King of Northumbria, Oswy, made use of the superior authority in ecclesiastical affairs which seems to have been accorded to the Bretwalda; he showed, at the same time, that though the Celtic party, by appealing to the recollections of his youth, had been able to persuade him to make Wilfrid the victim of an unjust exclusion, he remained, nevertheless, sincerely submissive to the primacy of the Holy See, which he had so solemnly recognized at Whitby. After consulting with the young King Egbert of Kent and the chiefs of the Anglo-Saxon clergy, he appointed a monk of Canterbury, named Wighard, universally known to be worthy of the episcopate, a Saxon by birth, but trained in the school of the first missionaries sent from Rome by St.

667.

[79] As to the election of abbots, which was one of the most essential bases of the Benedictine rule, it appears that Wilfrid himself departed from it without hesitation by naming to his monks the successor they were to give him. — Eddius, c. 61.

Gregory,[80] and thus uniting all the conditions necessary to satisfy at once the exigencies of the national spirit and those of the most severe orthodoxy. Then, still acting in conjunction with the King of Kent, he did what had never before been done by an English king, nor, indeed, so far as I know, by the king of any newly converted nation; he sent the archbishop-elect to Rome to be consecrated by the Pope, so that he might be able to ordain perfectly orthodox bishops in all the churches of England.

Referred by King Oswy to the Pope.

Wighard had but just arrived at Rome, when he died there with nearly all his attendants. The two kings then resolved to leave to the Pope the choice of the new metropolitan of England.

But great as was Oswy's zeal and humility in yielding to Roman supremacy, the want of eagerness displayed by Vitalien, who was then Pope, in using the power thus given up to him, was equally remarkable. He replied to Oswy that he had not yet been able to find a person suited for so distant a mission, but promised to make further attempts to find one, and in the mean time congratulated the king on his faith, exhorting him to continue to conform, whether with regard to Easter, or to any other question, to the traditions of the Apostles Peter and Paul, whom God had given to the world as two great lights, to enlighten every day the hearts of the faithful by their doctrine; and exhorted him to complete the work of the conversion and union of the whole island in the same apostolic faith. He sent him, at the same time, some relics of different martyrs, and a cross containing a portion of the chains of St. Peter for Queen Eanfleda, the friend of Wilfrid. "Your wife," said the Pope, "is our spiritual daughter; her virtues and good works are our joy, and that of all the Roman Church, and they bloom before God like the perfumed flowers of spring."[81]

[80] "Intellexerat enim veraciter quamvis educatus a Scottis, quia Romana esset catholica et apostolica ecclesia. . . . Cum electione et consensu sanctæ ecclesiæ gentis Anglorum. . . . Virum nomine Vigherdum qui a Romanis B. Gregorii papæ discipulis in Cantia fuerat omni ecclesiastica institutione sufficienter edoctus." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 29; *Hist. Abbatum in Wiramutha et Girvum*, n. 3.

[81] "Hominem docibilem et in omnibus ornatum antistitem, secundum vestrorum scriptorum tenorem, minime valebimus nunc reperire pro longinquitate itineris. . . . Festinet vestra celsitudo, ut optamus totam suam insulam Deo Christo dicare. . . . De cujus pio studio cognoscentes, tantum cuncta sedes apostolica una nobiscum lætatur, quantum ejus pia opera coram Deo fragrant et vernant."

St. Theodore, a Greek monk, seventh Archbishop of Canterbury.

After a new and long search the Pope fixed his choice on Adrian, an African by birth, and Abbot of a monastery near Naples, equally versed in ecclesiastical and monastic discipline, and in the knowledge of Greek and Latin. Adrian made no objection either to the distance or to his ignorance of the Anglo-Saxon language, but he declared himself unworthy of the episcopate, and pointed out to the Pope a monk whose age and qualifications accorded better with this difficult mission. This was a monk named Andrew, attached to a nunnery in Italy, and who was judged worthy to be chosen; but his bodily infirmities obliged him to give up the appointment. Then Adrian, again urged by the Pope, proposed to him another of his friends, a Greek monk named Theodore, born, like St. Paul, at Tarsus, but then living at Rome, of good life and morals, of a knowledge so profound and various, that he was surnamed the Philosopher,[82] and already of a venerable age, being sixty-six years old. This proposition was accepted by the Pope, but with the condition that the Abbot Adrian should accompany his friend to England, to watch over his proceedings, that nothing contrary to the orthodox faith might be introduced into the Church, as was too often done by the Greeks. This precaution was justified by the cruel and sanguinary dissensions which then disturbed the Eastern Church, occasioned by the heresy of the Monotheists, and the constant interference of the Byzantine emperors in questions of faith. The matter being thus arranged, Theodore, who had his head entirely shaved, after the custom of the Eastern monks, was obliged to defer his journey for four months, that his hair might grow, before he could receive the crown-shaped tonsure of the West. As soon as his hair had been properly shaved, he was consecrated by the Pope, and started with the Abbot Adrian for England.

The Pope joins with him the African Adrian and the Anglo-Saxon Benedict Biscop.

26th March, 668.

But to the Asiatic and the African, so strangely chosen to rule the Anglo-Saxon Church, and who so well fulfilled their task, the Pope wisely determined to add a third, whose help, especially at the commencement of their mission, would be indispensable to them. This was the young Northumbrian noble, Benedict Biscop, whom we have seen start from England to make his pilgrimage to Rome with Wilfrid, parting

[82] "Sæculari simul et ecclesiastica philosophia præditum virum, et hoc in utraque lingua, græca scilicet et latina." — Bede, *Hist. Abbatum*, c. 8. Cf *Hist. Ecclesiast.*, iv. 1.

from him at Lyons. After his first journey, Benedict returned to England, and gave his countrymen an ecstatic account of all that he had seen at Rome, every recollection of which he cherished. These recollections drew him a second time to Rome, where, after new studies and new enjoyments, he received the tonsure, and embraced a monastic life at the great sanctuary of Lerins, where Abbot Aygulphe had just introduced the Benedictine rule.[83] After remaining two years in this still venerated isle, he was unable to resist his desire of returning to Rome out of devotion to St. Peter. He arrived there for the third time in a trading vessel, and remained until Pope Vitalien commanded him to give up this pilgrimage in order to accomplish a much more meritorious one by returning to his own country as guide and interpreter to the new archbishop.[84] Benedict obeyed, and seventy years after the mission of St. Augustin, the three envoys started for England to take possession of it, as it were, a second time, in the name of the Church of Rome.

The apostolic travellers arrested on their journey by Ebroïn.

But their journey was not without hinderance; it took them more than a year to go from Rome to Canterbury. Instead of finding in France, as Augustin had done, the generous assistance of a queen like Brunehilde, the new missionaries became the prey of the tyrant Ebroïn, mayor of the palace, the first of those great statesmen, too numerous in our history, whom posterity has so meanly admired or absolved, and who, to the misfortune of our country, sought the triumph of their personal greatness only in the universal abasement and servitude of others. The presence of these three personages, a Greek, an African, and an Anglo-Saxon, all bearing recommendations from the Pope, appeared suspicious to the all-powerful minister. The Byzantine emperor, Constantine II., at that time still sovereign of Rome, which he had lately visited and pillaged, but where he talked of re-establishing the seat of empire, had excited the anxiety of Ebroïn, who

[83] Allioz, *Histoire du Monastère de Lérins*, 1860, vol. i. p. 371. I am glad to mention, in passing, this monograph as one of the best works of our time on monastic history.

[84] "Ad patriam reversus studiosius ea quæ videt ecclesiasticæ vitæ instituta diligere et quibus potuit prædicare non desiit. . . . Non pauca scientiæ salutaris quemadmodum et prius hausta dulcedine. . . . Adveniente nave mercatorio, desiderio satisfecit. . . . Et quia Benedictum sapientem, industrium, religiosum ac nobilem virum fore conspexit (papa) huic . . . cum comitibus suis commendavit episcopum . . . cui pariter interpres existere posset et ductor." — *Hist. Abbatum*, c. 2, 3.

imagined that the Papal messengers might be charged with the management of some plot between the Emperor and the Anglo-Saxon kings against the Frankish kingdom of Neustria and Burgundy, of which he regarded himself as chief. The Abbot Adrian appeared to him the most dangerous, and he therefore detained him a prisoner for two years after the release of the others. Meanwhile, thanks to the direct intervention of King Egbert, the Archbishop Theodore was enabled to reach England, and solemnly take possession of his see. His first act was to confide to his pious companion, Benedict Biscop, the government of that great abbey near Canterbury which contained the sepulchres of the archbishops and kings, and which had been dedicated by St. Augustin to St. Peter, though it is now only known by the name of the Apostle of England. Benedict remained there as superior until the arrival of Adrian, to whom it was transferred by the new archbishop, according to the Pope's commands that the African abbot and the monks who accompanied him should be established in his diocese.[85]

27th May, 669.

671.

The arrival of St. Theodore marks a new era in the history of the Anglo-Saxons.[86]

Pontificate of St. Theodore. 669-690.

There must have been, indeed, a stern courage and a holy ambition in this grand old man to induce him, at sixty-seven years of age, to undertake so laborious a task as that of the spiritual government of England. The history of the Church presents few spectacles more imposing and more comforting than that of this Greek of Asia Minor, a countryman of St. Paul, a mitred philosopher[87] and almost septuagenarian monk, journeying from the shores of the East to train a young nation of the West — disciplining, calming, and guiding all those discordant elements, the different races, rival dynasties, and new-born forces, whose union was destined to constitute one of the greatest nations of the earth.

He is the first metropolitan recognized by all England.

Thanks to the assistance of the powerful King of Northumbria, the new Archbishop of Canterbury found himself invested, for the first time, with authority recognized by all the Anglo-Saxons. This supremacy, which the intelligent desire of the Bret-

[85] Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 1; *Hist. Abbat.*, c. 3.

[86] Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 77.

[87] "Cofamulum et coepiscopum nostrum, magnæ insulæ Britanniæ archiepiscopum et philosophum." — *Epist.* Agathonis *Papæ ad Imp.*, ap. Baronium, an. 680.

walda Oswy for union with Rome enabled him to exercise, was solemnly recognized by Pope Vitalien, who renewed in his favor all the prerogatives conferred by Gregory the Great on Augustin and the see of Canterbury, omitting all mention of the second see which Gregory had wished to establish at York.[88] This supreme authority over all the Churches of Great Britain, whatever their antiquity or origin, had been, in the hands of Augustin and his successors, only a title and a right; in those of the venerable Greek monk, it now became, for the first time, a powerful and incontestable reality.

He reestablishes Wilfrid in the see of York.

The first use which he made of this supremacy was to repair the injustice of which Wilfrid had been the victim. Oswy seems to have made no opposition; he yielded to the apostolic authority, whose decrees Theodore made known to him.[89] He thus crowned his reign by an act of reparation and of repentance, in allowing the man whom he had unjustly expelled[90] to be re-established in the episcopal see of the capital of his kingdom. The humble and pious Ceadda, who, by some strange forgetfulness of duty, had consented to replace Wilfrid, made no opposition to the application of canon law, which deprived him of his usurped see. He said to the archbishop, "If you are certain that my episcopate is not legitimate, I will abdicate it voluntarily; I have never thought myself worthy of it, and only accepted it in obedience." Upon which, as Wilfrid, when dispossessed by him, retired to the Monastery of Ripon, he himself returned to that of Lastingham, founded by his brother, from whence he had been taken to be made bishop. He lived for some time peacefully in this retreat. But the generous Wilfrid appreciating the vir-

[88] "Is primus erat in archiepiscopis, cui omnis Anglorum ecclesia manus dare consentiret." — Bede, iv. 2. Cf. Guill. Malmesb., *De Gest. Pontif., Angl.*, i. 1. "Nobis visum est te exhortari et in præsente commendare tuæ sagacissimæ sanctitati omnes ecclesias in insulas Britanniæ positas. Omnia ergo quæ a S. Gregorio prædecessore nostro Augustino sincello suo statuta sunt atque firmata vel etiam per sacrum usum pallii concessum, nos tibi in ævum concessimus." — *Diplomo of Pope Vitalien* in *Act. SS. Bolland.*, t. vi. Septembris, p. 59.

[89] "Veniens ad regem . . . statuta apostolicæ sedis, unde emissus venerat, secum deportans." — Eddius, c. 15.

[90] It must be observed that Wilfrid was only bishop, never archbishop, of York. The metropolitan dignity attached by St. Gregory to that see disappeared after the flight of Paulinus, and was restored only in 735 to Egbert, known by the letter addressed to him by the venerable Bede, and by many relics of ecclesiastical legislation published in the *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England.*

tues of the holy intruder, whose diocese he had continued to inhabit, was determined to bring them back again to the light. The bishopric of the kingdom of Mercia having become vacant, he persuaded his faithful friend Wulphere to summon Ceadda thither, and gave up to him for his residence a place called Lichfield, previously bestowed by the king on Wilfrid, that he might establish an episcopal see there, either for himself or for another.[91] Theodore and Ceadda both consented to this plan. The only condition made by the archbishop was that the bishop should be consecrated anew, with the assistance of Wilfrid, on account of the irregularity caused by the presence of the two Britons who had assisted at his first consecration.[92] In other respects, Theodore never ceased to do him all the honor which his holy life deserved; and as, from love to his work, and according to the custom of the first Northumbrian bishops of Celtic race, Ceadda persisted in traversing on foot the immense extent of his new diocese, the primate commanded him to use a horse, and himself held the stirrup to oblige the humble bishop to mount.[93] With admirable delicacy, Wilfrid assigned to this innocent usurper the care of continuing the task which had occupied and consoled himself during his disgrace. For three years Ceadda occupied the same position in Mercia which Wilfrid himself had occupied, aiding the noble efforts of the king, and the holy Queen Ermenilda, to destroy the last traces of idolatry. In the intervals of repose left him by his pastoral journeys, he inhabited a little monastery which he had built near his cathedral, that he might there continue his life of prayer and study with seven or eight monks, his friends. It was here that he died, leaving behind him a noble example of humility, wisdom, fervor, and voluntary poverty. The narrative

Ceadda, the intruded saint, is made bishop in Mercia by Wilfrid.

His death. 2d March, 672.

[91] "Si me nosti episcopatum non rite suscepisse, libenter ab hoc officio discedo: quippe qui neque me unquam hoc esse dignum arbitrabar." — Bede, iv. 2. "Ille servus Dei verus et mitissimus. . . . Sciebat (Wilfridus) sub Wulfario rege fidelissimo amico suo locum donatum sibi." — Eddius, c. 15. Lichfield, erected into a metropolis some time during the eighth century, and still a bishopric, derived its name from the number of bodies of martyrs killed in the reign of Diocletian which have been discovered there — *Leich* or *Lich-field*.

[92] This is the first application of a canon which afterwards became law: "Qui ordinati sunt Scotorum vel Britonnum episcopi, qui in pascha vel tonsuræ catholica non sunt ordinati ecclesiæ, iterum a catholico episcopo manus impositione confirmentur." — Ap. Thorpe, p. 307.

[93] "Ipse cum sua manu levavit in equum, quia nimirum sanctum esse virum comperit." — Bede, iv. 3.

of his last days was transmitted by the monk who attended him to the venerable Bede, always so scrupulous in indicating the sources from which he drew the materials for his religious history of the English nation. "My father," said a disciple to the dying bishop, "dare I ask you a question?" "Ask what thou wilt." "I conjure you to tell me what are those sounds of celestial harmony which just now we heard, and which sometimes descend from heaven, and sometimes return thither; are they not the ineffable strains of angels?" "Thou hast then heard and recognized the voice from on high which must not be spoken of before my death. Yes; it is they. The angels are come to call me to that heaven which I have always loved and desired; they have promised to return in seven days to take me with them." And when the day of deliverance and recompense arrived, the witness of this happy death saw not only heaven open and the angels appearing; he seemed to see also the brother of the dying man, his inseparable companion in former days, and, like him, a bishop and monk, descending from the opening heaven to seek the soul of Ceadda and conduct it to eternal happiness. Many details of this nature, floating on the bosom of an ocean of forgotten ages and races, show us how, among these rude converts, so rapidly transformed into austere monks and saints, natural affection preserved all its empire, and mingled, in sweet and holy union, with the grandeur and beauty of their supernatural vocation.[94]

The Asiatic Theodore and the African Adrian make a visitation of England.

Having thus regulated or re-arranged the government of souls in the two largest kingdoms of the Saxon confederation, Northumbria and Mercia, the venerable archbishop pursued, with an activity in no way relaxed by age, the task which the Holy See had assigned him. He successively traversed all the provinces of the island already occupied by Anglo-Saxons. With the aid of the former bishops, and of those whom he ordained wherever they were wanting, he applied himself, in all the kingdoms, to pacify the sanguinary feuds of princes and nobles, to re-establish canonical order and

[94] "Vocem suavissimam cantantium atque lætantium de cœlo ad terras usque descendere. . . . Obsecro ut dicas quod erat canticum illud lætantium. . . . Revera angelorum fuere spiritus qui me ad cœlestia, quæ semper amabam ac desiderabam, præmia vocare venerunt. . . . Scio hominem in hac insula adhuc in carne manentem qui . . . vidit animam Ceddi fratris ipsius cum agmine angelorum descendere de cœlo, et assumpta secum anima ejus, ad cœlestia regna redire." — Bede, vi. 3. This brother was Bishop Cedd, who had acted as interpreter at Whitby.

ecclesiastical discipline, to correct abuses, to spread good morals, and to regulate, according to Roman custom, the celebration of Easter.[95] He is believed to have originated on this occasion that ecclesiastical law which commanded all fathers of families to repeat daily, and to teach to their children, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in the vulgar tongue.[96]

Abbot Adrian accompanied him everywhere, and seconded him in all things. These two aged monks, one Asian and the other African, were received, listened to, and obeyed by the Anglo-Saxons with that affectionate deference which in Christian hearts triumphs so easily over the prejudices and opposition of a narrow nationality. They repaid the popular attachment by their unwearied zeal for the souls and hearts of the people, preaching to them evangelical truth, with that intelligent and practical solicitude which makes true apostles.

Ecclesiastical legislation of Theodore. *Liber Pœnitentialis.*

The authentic monuments of their zeal are all preserved in the imposing collection of moral and penal institutes known as the *Liber Pœnitentialis* of Archbishop Theodore,[97] which has served as the model of so many other analogous collections. It is there apparent that if great excesses and shameful disorders had already appeared among the new Christians of England, these were kept in check by all the resources of spiritual fatherhood and priestly vigilance. It is surprising to find among these Germanic populations the traces of refined corruption mingled with the brutal vices of barbarians; but the art and authority which could inflict for every sin, even when confessed and pardoned, a penalty either public or secret, according to the circumstances, is all the more admirable. The punishments are generally of excessive severity, induced, it would seem, by the rudeness of barbarous manners, on which it was necessary first to act by means of intimidation. No doubt they were soon practically evaded by the equivalents of alms and other good works. At the same time, in this code set forth by a Greek prelate sent from Rome, there appears no trace of Roman or Byzantine law. On

[95] "Peragrata insula tota. . . . Libentissime ab omnibus suscipiebatur atque audiebatur . . . per omnia comitante et co-operante Adriano. . . . Gratiosi ad pacificandum invicem inimicos." — Bede, iv. 2.

[96] Hook, i. 152. I have not been able to find this rule among the Acts of Theodore, but it is several times repeated in the *Monumenta Ecclesiastica* of the following century. See Thorpe, *passim*.

[97] The most complete version is found in the great collection of Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*. Cf. Hook, op. cit., vol. i. p. 169.

the contrary, it embodies the entire penal system of the Germanic laws, founded on the principle which required a punishment for every offence, or a compensation for every punishment.[98] And as it is always pleasant to find a loving and tender heart among the masters and teachers of the people, it is delightful to read, at the end of one of the most ancient manuscripts of this formidable code, a few lines, in which the archbishop thus commends his work and his soul to a prelate, one of his friends: "I beseech thee, noble and pious bishop, to pour out at the feet of God the abundance of thy prayers for Theodore, the poor stranger whom thou lovest."[99]

In the course of this apostolic journey, Theodore naturally visited Lindisfarne, as well as the chief seats of the other dioceses. The metropolis of Celtic resistance was obliged to acknowledge the authority of the Roman metropolitan, who imprinted upon it the seal of subordination and union by dedicating, under the name and in honor of St. Peter, the monastic cathedral of the Celtic bishops which Bishop Aïdan had commenced to build, in the Scottish mode, and entirely in wood, many years before.[100]

He organizes the parochial system.

It is to these pastoral visits of Archbishop Theodore that all agree in tracing back the commencement of parochial organization, — above all, in the south of England. Until then, the monasteries had been almost the only permanent centres of faith and religious instruction. The bishops issued from their monasteries to preach and to baptize; they were constantly wayfaring.[101] The monks, especially those of the Celtic monasteries,

[98] See some curious details in ELMHAM, p. 206, on the foundation of a monastery due to the application of this system of compensation.

[99] "Te nam, sancte speculator,
Verbi Dei digne dator,
Pontificum ditum decor,
Hæddi, pie presul, precor,
Pro me tuo peregrino
Preces funde Theodoro."

This was addressed to Hedda, Bishop of the West Saxons at Winchester, in 676, much praised by Bede, v. 18. A distinction must be made between the singer Hedd or Eddi, biographer of Wilfrid; Bishop Hedda, his contemporary and colleague at Winchester; Bishop Ceadda, who supplanted him at York; and Bishop Cedd, brother of Ceadda. The narrator condemned to open a way through this forest of obscure names, so easily confounded, and so subject to infinite alteration from the pens of more recent annalists, may well claim the sympathy of his readers.

[100] BEDE, iii. 25.

[101] "Longe lateque omnia pervagatus." This is the eulogy which falls perpetually from the pen of Bede.

traversed the country, stopping at different stations previously indicated to administer the sacraments, just as is now done in lands under the charge of missionaries, and in certain districts of Ireland.[102] But churches, regularly served by monks or secular priests, were speedily built on the continually increasing estates of the great abbeys and monastic cathedrals. The kings and nobles obtained from bishops and abbots the right of choosing in the monastery, or among the cathedral clergy, some priests who might, for the good of their souls, accompany them on their expeditions, or live with them in their rural residences. Theodore availed himself of this custom to lay the foundations of a parochial system, by persuading the princes and great proprietors to build churches on their domains, and to attach to them a resident priest, with an endowment in land or in fixed rents; in return for which they should have the right of choosing their priests. From this right has grown the system of church patronage, such as it now subsists in England, with the special impost, not yet abolished, called church-rate, levied on all the proprietors of a parish for the keeping of the church in repair: so true is it that everything bears the trace of solidity and permanence in the country which twelve centuries ago was constituted as a nation by that union of the Church with the Anglo-Saxon race, of which Italian and Greek monks such as Theodore and Augustin were the plenipotentiaries.[103] Nearly all the present names of counties date from this epoch. All the dioceses of that time exist still; everything has remained so unchanged, that a map of the country in the tenth century might serve for to-day; while there remains not one single trace of the ancient territorial divisions of France and Germany.

Theodore is anxious to increase the number of dioceses.

After having thus laid the foundation of parishes, it was Theodore's desire to proceed to a new episcopal division. Hitherto, except in Kent, each kingdom of the Heptarchy had formed a diocese, each king choosing to have one bishop of his own,

[102] See above, pages 237 to 240, the first missions in Northumbria.

[103] "Hic excitavit fidelium voluntatem ut in civitatibus et villis ecclesias fabricarentur, parochias distinguerent, et assensus regios his procuravit; ut si qui sufficientes essent super proprium fundum construere ecclesias earumdem perpetuo patronato gauderent; si inter limites alterius alicujus dominii ecclesias facerent, ejusdem fundi domini notarentur pro patronis." — Thos. de Elmham, *Hist. Monast. S. Augustini*, p. 289; Hook, i. 159. Cf. Lappenberg, p. 190; Kemble, c. 9; and, above all, Lingard, *Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. pp. 156–197. The secular priests placed in these parishes took afterwards the name of mass-priests.

and only one. Northumbria, long divided into two kingdoms, had never formed more than one diocese, of which the seat was sometimes in the ancient Roman metropolis of York, sometimes in the sacred isle of Lindisfarne; and this diocese, even after a partial division, remained so vast that the venerable Bede mentions a large number of districts which had never yet been visited by their bishop.

The extreme inequality of extent and population in the different Saxon kingdoms, which a single glance at the map will make apparent, had thus led to a similar difference between the dioceses; those of the north and the centre being far too large for the administration of one man. But Theodore here met with the resistance which is almost always produced in similar cases. He convoked a council at Hertford in the fourth year of his pontificate, the first ever held in the Anglo-Saxon Church; but was obliged to adjourn his proposition, as he himself relates in the official report of the deliberations of this assembly, dictated by himself to his notary.[104] At the same time, he reserved to himself the means of returning to the charge by decreeing that the national council should meet once a year at a place called Cloveshoe, according to Saxon fashion, in the open air. He was happier, however, in the two canons regarding monasteries which he proposed, and which were unanimously adopted by the bishops and numerous abbots attached to the Roman ritual who composed the council.[105] Of these canons, naturally marked by the Benedictine spirit, since the greater part of the bishops in the council were sons of St. Benedict, the first forbade bishops to disturb monasteries in any way, or to despoil them of their goods; the second forbade monks to pass from one monastery to another without the permission of the abbot. This was a consecration of the vow of *stability*, which, though often neglected, was not the less an essential distinction of the order of St. Bene-

Council of Hertford. 24th Sept., 673.

[104] "Nonum capitulum in commune tractatum est, ut plures episcopi, crescente numero fidelium, augerentur: sed de hac ad præsens siluimus.— Bede, iv. 5. This notary Titillo, whose presence is proved by Theodore and Bede, seems to us to answer the objection raised by Kemble to the authenticity of Ethelbert's donation to Augustin on account of the mention of a referendary in that document.

[105] "Concilium episcoporum, una cum eis qui canonice patrum statuta et deligerent et nossent, magistris ecclesiæ pluribus."— Bede, iv. 5. Of the eight bishops then in England, five assisted in person at the council, and Wilfrid was represented there by his envoys.

diet from the great monastic communities of the East or of Celtic countries.[105]

The literary progress of the English monasteries due to Theodore and Adrian.

The monasteries having been thus placed under the most imposing safeguard by the Greek metropolitan of England, there yet remained for him, as well as for his African assistant, Adrian, an intellectual and literary development as worthy of the admiration as of the gratitude of posterity. Both were profoundly attached to and imbued with, not only ecclesiastical knowledge, but secular learning, that double intellectual current of which the middle ages never ceased to give examples. Theodore had brought with him a copy of Homer, which he read perpetually, and which was long preserved and admired by his ecclesiastical descendants.[107] They gathered round them, in the monasteries where they lived or which they visited, a crowd of young and ardent disciples, whom they led daily to the fountain of knowledge. While explaining Holy Scripture to them with particular care, they taught their scholars also ecclesiastical astronomy and arithmetic, which served to establish the Pascal computation, and afterwards the art of composing Latin verses. But it was chiefly the study of the two classic tongues which flourished under their care. These became so general that, sixty years after, there were still monks trained in the school of Adrian and Theodore who spoke Greek and Latin as readily as Anglo-Saxon. At the same time, music and chanting, hitherto cultivated only in the monasteries of Canterbury and by the deacon James at York, spread all over England.[108] Monasteries thus transformed into schools and homes of scientific study could not but spread a taste and respect for intellectual life, not only among the clergy, but also among their lay-protectors,

[106] "*Tertium.* Ut quæque monasteria Deo consecrata sunt, nulli episcoporum liceat ea in aliquo inquietare, nec quicquam de eorum rebus violenter abstrahere. *Quartum.* Ut ipsi monachi non migrent de loco ad locum, hoc est, de monasterio ad monasterium, nisi per demissionem proprii abbatis, sed in ea permaneant obedientia quam tempore suæ conversionis promiserunt." — BEDE, iv. 5. That Theodore did not intend to permit the monasteries to absorb all religious life, to the detriment of the secular clergy, is proved by this article of the *pœnitentialis:* "Nec libertas monasterii est pœnitentiam sæcularibus judicare, quia proprie clericorum est." — THORPE, p. 307.

[107] GODWIN, *De Præsulibus Angliæ*, p. 41.

[108] "Literis sacris simul et sæcularibus abundanter ambo instructi, congregata discipulorum caterva, scientiæ salutaris quotidie fluminia irrigandis eorum cordibus emanabant. . . . Sed et sonos cantandi in ecclesia. . . . Ab hoc tempore per omnes Anglorum ecclesias discere cœperunt." — BEDE, iv. 2.

the friends and neighbors of each community. Under the powerful impulse given to it by the two Roman monks, England became almost as important a literary centre as Ireland or Italy.[109]

While recalling this peaceful and luminous period of which Theodore and Adrian were the stars, the enthusiasm of the venerable Bede breaks out into a kind of dithyramb: "Never," he says, "since the Anglo-Saxons landed in Britain, had more happy days been known. We had Christian kings, at whose bravery the barbarous nations trembled. All hearts were inflamed by the hope of those celestial joys which had just been preached to them; and whosoever wished to be instructed in sacred learning found the masters that he needed close at hand." [110]

Let us add, to characterize with more precision this pontificate of Theodore, that he was the last foreign missionary called to occupy the metropolitan dignity in England, and that the Greek monk succeeded, as has been justly remarked, in transforming into an indigenous and national establishment, into a public and social institution, that which had hitherto been only a missionary church. This transformation could only have been made by that special and supreme authority with which, at the demand of the Anglo-Saxons themselves, the Oriental archbishop had been invested by the Holy See, and the result was to give to the popes a whole nation as a lever for their future action both upon nations already Christian and upon those which still remained to be converted.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING OF THE TRIALS OF WILFRID: ST. ETHELDREDA. — 669–678.

Wilfrid, reduced to a subordinate position, reconciles himself to King Oswy, who dies after a prosperous reign of twenty-eight years. — Extension of Northumbrian domination, and of Wilfrid's jurisdiction towards the north. — At the commencement of the new reign, alliance between him and King

[109] Hook, t. i. p. 165. Mignet, *Mémoire sur la Conversion de l'Allemagne par les Moines*, p. 25.

[110] "Neque unquam prorsus feliciora fuere tempora . . . dum omnium vota ad nuper audita cœlestis regni gaudia penderent." — Bede, iv. 2.

Egfrid, who triumphs both in the insurrection of the Picts and the invasion of the Mercians. — Episcopal virtues and austerities of Wilfrid. — His confirmation journeys; the child resuscitated. — Wilfrid's monasteries become centres of public education. — Services which he renders to the arts; music, spread of the Gregorian chant. — Great architectural works at York, at Ripon, and especially at Hexham, where he builds the finest church on this side the Alps on land given by Queen Etheldreda. — Connection of Wilfrid with Etheldreda, the first and most popular of English female saints. — Her origin and connections. — Twice married, she succeeds in consecrating her virginity to God. — Wilfrid encourages her in her resistance to King Egfrid, and gives her the veil at Coldingham; Egfrid pursues her. — She flies to Ely. — Legends of her journey. — Foundation and monastic life at Ely. — The major-domo Owen. — Wilfrid continues to advise Etheldreda. — His quarrel with Egfrid provoked by the new queen, Ermenburge. — The Archbishop Theodore interferes in their disputes. — He deposes Wilfrid, and divides his diocese into three new bishoprics, which he confides to Celtic monks. — Wilfrid appeals to Rome. — The saints and great abbots of his country remain indifferent or hostile. — Strange ignorance of ecclesiastical right, even among the saints.

Wilfrid reduced to a subordinate position.

While the Archbishop Theodore received everywhere the credit of the intellectual and moral prosperity of England, Wilfrid, re-established in his see, but eclipsed by the popularity and authority of the primate, appears to have been thrown back into a subordinate position. Nevertheless it was he who had given the first signal for this renewal of Roman influence in England, who had gained the decisive battle of Whitby, who had begun, supported, and decided the struggle against the insular spirit and its exclusive tendencies, and who, in more than one trial, had paid the price of his spontaneous devotion. And it was a stranger from the depths of Asia Minor who came to reap what he had sown, while not one special mark of pontifical approbation or gratitude had honored the first author and most intrepid champion of this happy revolution. In contemplating the triumphs of Theodore, there only remained for him to say, like the precursor of our Saviour, "He must increase, but I must decrease," and to prove the disinterestedness and sincerity of his soul, by lending all the assistance possible to his venerable rival.

Wilfrid reconciled to King Oswy.

This he did by sending deputies to the council of Hertford. Enough occupation besides remained to him in dividing his life between the duties of the episcopate and those of his monastic profession. Reduced to

a secondary rank, he could yet find ample satisfaction for his zeal for the good of souls and of the Church, above all, since his reconciliation with Oswy. This reconciliation was complete, and accompanied by such an adhesion to the opinions of Wilfrid on the part of the Bretwalda, that, having fallen ill, he conceived the project of going, if he recovered — he, the first of Saxon kings — to pass the remainder of his life near the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome. He implored Wilfrid to accompany him, promising him new gifts to keep up that pomp and magnificence of worship which was so dear to the bishop. But the death of Oswy put a stop to this project. He died at the age of fifty-eight, after a reign of twenty-eight years, which had been signalized by the deliverance of his country, and by the overthrow of the pagan domination of the Mercians, and which, had it not been stained by the murder of the pious Oswin, would have been the most glorious and happy in the Saxon annals. He was buried at Whitby, in the great maritime monastery to which he had given his daughter as the price of his decisive victory over the pagans. This daughter, Elfleda, on becoming abbess ten years after the death of her father, claimed his remains, and placed them beside those of her maternal grandfather Edwin, the first Christian king among the northern English, so that the two greatest princes of the two rival Northumbrian dynasties reposed together in this monastic necropolis.[111]

Who dies. 15th Feb., 670.

This famous Oswy, last and greatest Bretwalda of whom history keeps any record, had established in the north of his kingdom a supremacy still more extensive in some respects, and more durable, than in the south. Passing the frontiers which his predecessors Edwin and Oswald had given to Northumbria on the Caledonian side, he subjugated all the territory between the Forth and the Tay.[112] But it was chiefly in the east of the central peninsula, in those districts which have since received the names of Lothian and the Marches, that he impressed on the institutions, manners, and language, that Anglo-Saxon character which, throughout the history of Scotland, remains so visibly distinct from the manners and traditions of Caledonia. Hence

Supremacy of Oswy in the North.

[111] "In hoc monasterio et ipsa et pater ipsius Oswi et pater matris ejus Edwinus et multi alii nobiles in ecclesia S. Petri sepulti sunt." — Bede, iii. 24.

[112] "Perdomuit . . . gentem Pictorum maxima ex parte regno Anglorum subjecit." — Bede, iii. 24.

arose that partition of Scotland during the whole of its independent existence between two influences, or rather between two races, nominally ruled by the same kings, but distinct by language, laws, cultivation, and all the habits of life, and almost always at bitter feud with each other.[113]

Extension of the diocese of Wilfrid.

Oswy's victories over the race which had formerly sheltered his youth and exile extended, out of all proportion, the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Northumbria, which had been originally established at Lindisfarne in the centre of the kingdom, but which, since the restoration of Wilfrid, had been fixed at York, much further south. The crosier of Wilfrid thus extended not only over the two primitive kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira, but also over three provinces inhabited by the vanquished races, the Picts of Lothian, the Britons of Cumberland, and the mingled population of Britons, Scots, and Picts in Galloway.[114] His spiritual authority was recognized, at least nominally, by all the Celtic races, and it cannot be doubted that he used all his efforts to root out from among them, as from among the Northumbrians, the customs of their fathers. This also, was, no doubt, one of the causes of that flood of resistance and discontent which was to sweep him away in the end.

His union with the new King Egfrid.

Oswy was replaced on the Northumbrian throne by his son Egfrid. During the first years of the new reign the concord between the king and the bishop was complete. The Picts, however, imagined that the youth of Egfrid would furnish them with an opportunity of regaining all that his father had taken from them. A general insurrection took place, seconded by all the auxiliaries which could be provided by the unconquered tribes of Caledonia. But Egfrid, a worthy successor of the valiant kings Oswy and Oswald, put himself at the head of a troop of cavalry, surprised his enemies, and exterminated them. We are not told whether religion had any part in this war, but it is plain that all the desires of Wilfrid were for the triumph of the Northumbrians by the language of his friend Eddi, who speaks of the Picts as brutes (though they were already Christians), describes as *bestial* their hatred of the Saxon yoke, and rejoices that two rivers were so choked with their corpses that it was almost possible to cross dryshod to attack the survivors and

Victories over the insurgent Picts. 670.

[113] Augustin Thierry, *Dix Ans d'Etudes Historiques*, p. 166.

[114] "Wilfrido administrante episcopatum, nec non et omnium Northymbrorum, sed et Pictorum, quousque rex Oswin imperium protendere poterat." — Bede, iv. 3. Cf. Varin, memoir already quoted.

bring them again under the detested yoke which fifteen years later they succeeded in throwing off forever.[115]

Wilfrid must have been more embarrassed when Wulphere, his old and faithful friend, the protector of his disgrace, the husband of the gentle Ermenilda, too faithful to the traditions of his father Penda, tried in his turn to destroy the young Egfrid, and to render Northumbria again tributary to Mercia. But he soon decided for his hereditary chief, and joined his exhortations, in the name of the men of God, to those addressed by the Northumbrian Parliament to the king, to excite him to a most vigorous resistance, in which they triumphed.[116] Thus it was not Northumbria, but Mercia, which became tributary. Egfrid even seized a whole province to increase his kingdom, already so vast, and never allowed the Mercians to regain their independence till after the accession of Ethelred, brother of Wulphere, who had married the sister of the victor.[117]

And over the Mercians.

Egfrid and Wilfrid were now both victorious: one over the enemies who had menaced his kingdom in the north and south; the other over the dissidents who occupied so large a portion of his diocese. During several years of a very temporary alliance, which was destined to end in the most bitter enmity, they combined all the power of their double authority to strengthen the edifice of Northumbrian royalty, and the just supremacy of Roman customs, over the vanquished Celts and the tributary Mercians. The young king showed great deference to the already celebrated prelate who had been the friend of his elder brother. Harvests of unusual abundance seemed to the people a pledge of celestial protection; and, as in the other parts of England, the harmony of the priesthood and royalty, under the auspices of a great bishop, seemed about to bring in an era of genera peace and prosperity.[118]

[115] "Tenero adhuc regno, populi bestiales Pictorum feroci animo subjectionem Saxonum despiciebant. . . . Statim equitatu exercito præparato . . . stragem immensam populi subruit, duo flumina cadaveribus mortuorum replens, ita . . . ut supra siccis pedibus ambulantes, fugientium turbas occidentes persequebantur, et in servitutem redacti populi . . . subjecti jugo captivitatis jacebant." — Eddius, c. 18.

[116] "Rex vero, consilio senum patriam custodire, ecclesias Dei defendere episcopo docente, in Deo confisus." — *Ibid.*, c. 19.

[117] Bede, iv. 12. See genealogical tables VI. and VIII., Appendix, pp. 000. and 000.

[118] "Wilfrido episcopo ad austrum super Saxones, ad aquilonem super Britones et Scotos, Pictosque regnum ecclesiarum multiplicabatur. . . . Rex et regina simul Wilfrido obedientes facti, pax et gaudium in populis, anni frugiferi." — Eddius, c. 20, 18.

Episcopal virtues of Wilfrid.

The power of Wilfrid was used only for the good of souls, commencing with his own. He was surpassed by no one in those works of piety and mortification which the numerous temporal cares that oppressed him rendered yet more dear and yet more necessary. His nights passed in prayer, his days in studying the Holy Scriptures, perhaps edified and surprised his visitors and daily companions less than his fasts and abstinence. Saxon intemperance was confounded by the example of this powerful personage, the first in the country, except the king, who never permitted himself to drink more than the contents of a small phial, even when he was most exhausted, and after a long journey on foot under a burning sun. As to purity of body and soul, he believed that he preserved it by washing from head to foot in cold but consecrated water every night, summer and winter ; and he preserved this habit — borrowed, perhaps, unconsciously, from the austerities of Celtic monachism [119] — until he was forbidden to continue it by the Pope, on account of his age.[120]

His zeal for good was tempered, at this time at least, by great moderation. We are told expressly in considering this epoch of his life, that he had made himself dear to all the different races of his immense diocese, from the Humber to the Clyde. He multiplied, as much as possible, the priests and deacons necessary for the new parishes, which were everywhere formed ; but he reserved to himself the principal part in the fatigues and obligations of an apostolic ministry. He travelled, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, in all weathers and all seasons, through his great province, to baptize, to preach even in the smallest hamlets, and, above all, to administer the rite of confirmation. Everywhere eager crowds pursued him and surrounded him, to obtain the benefit of the sacraments from his hands.[121] It was in one of these journeys that an incident occurred, at the village of Tiddafrey, which ought to be recorded here. While the ceremony of confirmation was go-

His journeys for confirmation.

[119] See p. 101.

[120] "In conviviis tam abstinenter vivebat, ut numquam solus, quamvis parvissima phiala esset, potu consumpsisset, aut pro caloré sitiens, aut. . . . In vigiliis et orationibus, in lectione et jejuniis quis similis ei? . . . Corpus in aqua benedicta nocturnis horis inclementer æstate ac hieme consuetudinarie lavavit." — Eddius, c. 20.

[121] "Omnibus gentibus charus et amabilis. . . . Inter sæculares undas fluctuantes moderate novas ecclesias gubernabat. . . . Equitante et pergente ad varia officia episcopatus sui." — Eddius, c. 20, 17.

ing on, a poor mother, agonized by the loss of her first born, made her way, weeping, through the crowd, with the little body of her child clasped to her heart. Having reached the first rank among the mothers, who pressed forward with their children, she presented her dead son to the bishop among the living, as if to be confirmed with them. Wilfrid, leaning over the child, perceived that it was dead. Then, comprehending how it was, he paused beside the desolate mother, and watched her a while in silence; upon which she threw herself at his feet, covering them with tears and kisses, and with a voice broken by sobs, adjured him to give her back her child. "O, holy man," she cried, "beware how you destroy the faith of a desperate woman! Help me to believe; restore my child to life, and baptize it. To God and to you it is still living. Courage! fear not to do it in the strength of Christ!" Wilfrid remembered the Canaanite of the Gospel. He knelt in prayer. Then placing his right hand on the heart of the child, he felt that it beat, and so restored it to life. After having thus raised it up, and baptized it, he returned it to the mother, exacting a promise that at seven years old she should bring it to him to be trained as a servant of God.[122] This miracle may or may not be believed; but who can refuse to be touched by the cry of the mother? and it is pleasant to find in Wilfrid that goodness of heart which God sometimes gives to great disputants and stern champions, and which alone renders them completely irresistible.

The child restored to life.

Let us add, to return to the dark reality of earthly things, that the mother, once in possession of her child, would not give him up, but fled with him to the Britons[123] — that is to say, to the enemies of the saint, probably in Cumbria, which was also in the diocese of Wilfrid, and from whence it was necessary for an officer of the bishop to bring the child back by force to his benefactor. He afterwards became a monk at Ripon, where he was called the bishop's son.

It is not easy to understand how Wilfrid should have needed unwilling recruits to fill his monaster-

The monasteries of Wilfrid be-

[122] "Amaro animo susurrans, mœrore et onere fatigata . . . habens primogenitum mortuum sub sinu pannis involutum. . . . Coram facie agnoscentis cecidit in terram . . . adjuravit eum audaciter . . . pedes deosculabatur, lacrymis irrigavit, . . . 'O sanctissime, noli orbatæ mulieris fidem extinguere, sed credulitatem meam adjuva: suscita eum et baptiza; tibi enim et Deo vivit: in virtute Christi ne dubites." — Eddius, c. 17.

[123] "Latentem sub allis Britonum," Eddi says.

Some centres of public education.

ies, when the number of monks who thronged to them is one of the best established facts in his history. Besides, the Northumbrian monasteries, like others, were schools, and many of the children received there enrolled themselves among their masters. Some important details in the life of our saint prove that the education given in monasteries was a true public education, and fitted youths for the world as well as for the cloister. It is expressly said that the Anglo-Saxons of high rank, the earls and thanes, were eager to confide their children to Wilfrid, to be brought up in his monastic establishments; and that at the end of their education they chose between the service of God and that of the king. If they decided on a secular and military life, Wilfrid sent them to the king fully armed, as he himself at fourteen years of age had appeared before Queen Eanfleda.[124]

Services rendered by Wilfrid to the arts. Music.

During all the course of his laborious episcopate, Wilfrid was moved, by the love of God and the love of souls, to make great efforts for the consecration, to the service of the Church, of those inexhaustible treasures of art which at that time found refuge alone in the monastic order. Music, above all, appeared to him an indispensable auxiliary of the new faith. He was not content with establishing within his monasteries a course of musical instruction, the teachers of which he had brought from the great school of Gregorian song at Canterbury; but with the help of Stephen Eddi, who has left us the story of his life, he spread this instruction through all the churches of the north of England. Thanks to him, the Anglo-Saxon peasants mingled with their labors as well as with their prayers the sweet and solemn chanting of psalms in the Gregorian tones.[125] Thanks to him, Northumbria become a great centre of music, rivalling the school of Canterbury, in which the priests and

[124] "Principes et sæculares viri nobiles filios suos ad erudiendum sibi dederunt, ut aut Deo servirent, si eligerent, aut adultos, si maluissent, regi armatos commendaret." — Eddius, c. 20.

[125] Faber, pp. 62, 66. "Sed et sonos cantandi in ecclesia, quos eatenus in Cantia tantum noverant, ab hoc tempore per omnes Angloruin ecclesias discere cœperunt . . . primusque magister Nortanhymbrorum ecclesiis Æddi . . . invitatus de Cantia." — Bede, iv. 3. There is a second curious passage regarding other companions of Wilfrid: "Cantatorem quoque egregium, vocabulo Maban, qui a successoribus discipulorum B. papæ Gregorii in Cantia fuerat cantandi sonos edoctus, ad se suosque instituendos accersiit, ac per annos duodecim tenuit: quatenus et quæ illi non noverant, carmina ecclesiastica doceret: et ea quæ quondam cognita iongo usu vel negligentia inveterare cœperunt, hujus doctrina priscum renovarentur in statum. Nam et ipse episcopus Acca cantator erat peritissimus." — Bede, v. 19.

the faithful renewed their musical education periodically, as at the fountain head — a fact which must have associated the noble memory of Wilfrid with the solemn and consoling modulations of a popular and traditional liturgy.

His great architectural labors,

But ecclesiastical architecture offered him a still wider field; and the results obtained by his exertions roused his contemporaries to an enthusiasm the echo of which has descended to us. Born with a taste for art and building, and also with a decided love of pomp and magnificence, he devoted all these natural dispositions to the service of God.[125] At the head of the monkish *cæmentarii*, whom he had brought from Canterbury, he began by thoroughly repairing the primitive Cathedral of York, which had been founded by Paulinus, the first Roman missionary, and where Edwin, the first Christian king, with his daughter Eanfleda, had been baptized. Since the translation of the bishopric to Lindisfarne, this church had been like a place abandoned. The rain entered on all sides, and birds built their nests in it. Wilfrid, like a prudent architect, began his work by covering the roof with lead; he then put transparent glass in the windows; and finally caused the stones injured by damp to be washed and scraped. It seems even possible that he may have been the inventor of that white-washing which has since been so greatly abused;[127] after which he provided the restored cathedral with rich ornaments and a territorial endowment.

At the Cathedral of York;

At his old Monastery of Ripon;

But he was much more prodigal towards his beloved Monastery of Ripon, which he held by the gift of his first friend Alchfrid, and which had been the first centre of his independent and missionary action. He built there a vast basilica, dedicated to St. Peter, which excited universal amazement. Nothing had ever been seen equal to its lofty porches and columns of polished stone, nor, above all, to its magnificent Book of the Gospels, covered with plates of gold set with precious stones, which Wilfrid, for the good of his soul, had caused to be transcribed in letters of gold on purple vellum, and which he placed on the altar the day that the church was dedicated. On the day of

[126] "Crescebat ergo cum sæculari sumptu . . . pontifici nostro, amico sponsi æternalis, magis ac magis ardentissimus amor sponsæ."

[127] "Culmina corrupta tecti renovans, artificiose plumbo puro detegens, per fenestras introitum avium et imbrium vitro prohibuit; per quod tamen intro lumen radiabat Parietes lavans, secundum prophetam super lucem dealbavit." — Eddius, c. 15. "Ipse illas alba calce dealbavit." — Guill. Malmesb., *De Gest. Pontif. Angl.*, l. iii. f. 148.

this ceremony, in presence of King Egfrid, his brother, the neighboring abbots, the ealdormen,[128] the earls, lords, and other principal Saxons, Wilfrid, standing before the altar, turned towards the people who filled the church, and solemly declared his right to all the lands and churches, enumerating them by name, which had been conceded to him by the kings, with consent of the bishops and assembly of nobles of the country, and which were situated principally in that district which the British clergy had abandoned when flying before the swords of the Saxons. Thus his hostility against the Celtic Christians reappeared, even in the midst of this joyful solemnity, which ended in true Saxon fashion with a grand banquet, where the Abbot of Ripon entertained all the guests, and which lasted three days and three nights.[129]

At the new Abbey of Hexam.

The magnificence displayed by Wilfrid at Ripon was yet again surpassed in an entirely new foundation at Hexham, situated much further north, in the heart of Bernicia, not far from the place where the sainted King Oswald had planted, for the first time, the cross on the soil of Northumbria, and commenced that struggle which had secured the greatness and independence of his country. It was there — near to the blood-stained cradle of Northumbrian Christianity, at the foot of the lofty wall built as a defence against the Picts by the Emperor Severus, a little below the junction of the two branches of the Tyne, on a plain surrounded by undulating hills — that Wilfrid chose the site of a great monastery, destined, though he little suspected it, to be his own last asylum.[130] As he had dedicated his first abbey to St. Peter, he dedicated this to St. Andrew, the pat-

[128] This is the title then given to the greatest Saxon lords, earls, or governors, more or less hereditary, of provinces, — from hence the modern word alderman. The ealdorman is translated in the Latin works of the time by the word *dux*, and his functions were similar to those of the lord-lieutenant of each English county, or of the supreme courts of the kingdom of Hungary, the constitution of which so faithfully reproduced most of the English institutions.

[129] "Basilicam polito lapide a fundamentis in terris usque ad summum ædificatam variis columnis et porticibus suffultum. . . . Inauditum erat sæculis nostris miraculum. . . . Invitatis regibus, cum abbatibus præfectisque et subregulis totiusque dignitatis personæ. . . . Coram regibus enumerans regiones quas ante reges . . . et in illa die cum consensu et subscriptione episcoporum et omnium principum, illi dederunt. . . . Consummato sermone, magnum convivium trium dierum eo noctium . . . lætificantes inierunt." — Eddius, c. 27.

[130] This site is perfectly described in a recent publication of the Surtees Society, which contains a complete history of Hexham — *The Priory of Hexham, its Chroniclers, Endowments, and Annals*, by James Raine. Durham, 1864.

ron of the church in which he had first prayed on arriving at Rome, and from whence the first apostles of England had been sent. The surprise and admiration which his previous works had awakened became indescribable at the sight of the deep foundations dug, and immense stones placed in them for the basement of a church which, when finished — with its porches and pillars, its numerous naves and clerestories, its vast vaults underneath, its spiral staircases and galleries, and the imposing height of its spires — was regarded for two centuries as the most beautiful on this side the Alps, and as a kind of reproduction of Roman ambition.[131]

The monk mason fallen from the summit of the building.

From the pinnacle of one of these towers, which was of unheard-of height, a young monk upon one occasion fell to the ground, breaking his arms and legs on the pavement. The rest believed him dead, and were about to carry him away in a coffin, when Wilfrid, in tears, stopped the bearers, collected the whole community, and said to them: — "Pray all of you to God, with lively faith, that He would grant us the grace which He gave to St. Paul, that He would restore this child to life, and that the enemy may not have such occasion to rejoice in our work." The general prayer was granted. The medical members of the community bound up the broken limbs of the young monk, who recovered slowly, and lived long. This incident proves that Wilfrid himself directed the works,

[131] "Cujus profunditatem in terra cum domibus (?) mirifice politis lapidibus fundatam, et super terram multiplicem domum . . . variis linearum anfractibus viarum, aliquando sursum, aliquando deorsum, per cochleas circumductam, non est meæ parvitatis explicare . . . neque ullam domum aliam citra Alpes montes, talem ædificatam audivimus." — Eddius, c. 21. "Ibi ædificia minaci altitudine murorum, erecta . . . multa proprio sed et cæmentariorum, quos ex Roma munificentiæ attraxerat, magisterio . . . nunc qui Roma veniunt allegant ut qui Hagulstadensem fabricam vident, ambitionem Romanam se imaginari jurent." — Guillelm. Malmesb., *De Gest. Pontif.*, l. iii. f. 155. The successor of Wilfrid collected here a crowd of relics placed in shrines. Each triforium, formed by the intercolumniation of the edifice, was occupied by one of these shrines. This wonderful church, with all its riches, was burnt by the Danes in 875. Nothing now remains but the crypt, of which a plan, extremely curious and complicated, will be found in the excellent *Introduction to the Study of Gothic Architecture*, by Mr. J. H. Parker, p. 11. This crypt is now covered by the beautiful Abbey Church, rebuilt in the twelfth century, the choir and transept of which have preserved their original beauty, the nave having been destroyed by the Scots in 1296. Those among my readers who are interested in architecture will forgive an old archæologist for presenting to their notice the text of Richard, Prior of Hexham, who wrote about 1150, and who had seen the ruins of Wilfrid's church. It will be found in Appendix V., p. 000.

and that the monks of the monastery mingled with the *cæmentarii* by profession whom Wilfrid had brought from Canterbury, or even attracted from Rome by the offer of large salaries.[132]

A hundred years later, an illustrious Northumbrian monk, who has been adopted by France and received into the number of her distinguished men, the great Alcuin, begged the sons of Wilfrid to reckon him among the number of their familiar friends, referring at the same time to the admiration excited, even beyond the seas, by the magnificent dwelling left to them by their founder. "Oh, noble posterity of saints," he wrote to them, "heirs of their honors and of their spotless life, inhabitants of that dwelling so marvellous in beauty, walk in the footsteps of your fathers, so that, passing from the splendor of your earthly home, you may be worthy, by the grace of God, to rejoin those from whom you are descended in the kingdom of eternal beauty." [133]

Connection of Wilfrid with Queen Etheldreda.

The land on which the new Monastery of Hexham was built had been given to Bishop Wilfrid, not by the king, but by the queen, Etheldreda, whose personal estate it was, a part of her dowry.[134] It was the residence he preferred to all others, as much on account of the calm which he enjoyed there as from his tender affection for the giver.[135] It is now time to turn to this saint, whose life was so singular, whose influence over the destiny of Wilfrid was so marked, and in whom we must recognize the earliest, and for a long time the most popular, of all the English female saints.[136]

[132] "Cum ædificarent cæmentarii murorum altitudines, quidam juvenis de pinna enormis proceritatis elapsus ad terram . . . ultima spiramina trahens jacebat. . . . Pontificis lacrymantis moratione . . . spiritum vitæ recepit et alligantes medici ossa confracta de die in diem melioratus est." — EDDIUS, c. 22. See preceding note in respect to the Roman workmen.

[133] "Ædilberto episcopo et omni congregationi in ecclesia sancti Andreæ Deo serventium, Alchuinus vestræ clientellus caritatis in Christo salutem . . . O nobilissima sanctorum progenies patrum! illorum honoris venerabilisque vitæ successores et pulcherrimorum habitatores locorum vestrorum, sequimini vestigia patrum: ut de his pulcherrimis habitationibus ad eorum, qui vos genuerunt, æternæ beatitudinis consortium, in cælestis regni pulchritudinem, Deo donante, pervenire mereamini." — ALCUINI *Opera*, ed. Froben. 1777, t. i. p. 196.

[134] RAINE, p. xiv. This territory, known by the name of Hexhamshire, was twelve miles long and three broad.

[135] "Præ ceteris quibus præfuit ecclesiis, hanc creberius visitavit, devotius coluit." — ÆLRED, *De Sanctis Eccles. Hagustaldensis*, c. 1. "Tum ob amorem dilectissimæ dominæ suæ, tum propter secretiorem et quietiorem vitam." — RICARD. HAGUSTALD., *De Ant. et Moderno Statu ejusdem Ecclesiæ*, c. 2.

[136] Under the name of St. Audrey. This name, now quite fallen into disuse, is given by Shakespeare to one of his characters in *As You Like It*.

Etheldreda no doubt, like all the princes and princesses of the Anglo-Saxon dynasties, believed herself descended from Odin; but at least she was undoubtedly of the family of the Uffings, the royal race in East Anglia. Her father, King Anna, married a Northumbrian princess, sister of the Abbess Hilda, and grand niece of Edwin, first Christian king of Northumbria. It was to avenge the death of this father, who had fallen under the sword of the sanguinary Penda, that King Oswy, her father-in-law, made war on the Mercians, and not only delivered East Anglia, but also conquered and occupied Mercia. Etheldreda was the sister of Ermenilda, Queen of the Mercians, who had so well seconded Wilfrid in the work of converting her people.[137] She had also another sister, married to that King of Kent who was so zealous for the destruction of idols.[138] And she was niece, through her mother, of Hilda, the holy and powerful Abbess of Whitby, whose authority, though no doubt weakened since the victory gained by Wilfrid over her friends at Whitby itself, was, notwithstanding, always great throughout Northumbria.

Like all princesses whose history has fallen into the region of legends, the chroniclers boast of her precocious piety, the fervor and stainless purity of her early years. Nevertheless, she loved ornament; and on her death-bed still remembered the weight of the necklaces and jewels with which her delicate throat had been loaded.[139] These ornaments gave additional brilliancy to her great beauty, which excited, it is said, the passion of all the neighboring princes.[140] The most ardent of these, the Prince of the Gyrwiens, a Saxon colony established in the marshy country which separates East Anglia from Mercia, asked her in marriage, and obtained her from her father, two years before the death of that king on the field of battle.[141] Etheldreda, however, having resolved to follow the example of the 652.

[137] See above, p. 340.

[138] See p. 287. Cf. Bede, iv. 22; and Thomas, *Historia Eliensis*, i. 2, 25, ap. Act. SS. O. S. B. sec. ii. A new edition of this historian is published by Stewart, London, 1848.

[139] "Merito in collo pondus languoris porto, in quo juvenculam me memini supervacua monilium pondera portare." — Bede, iv. 19.

[140] "Ab ipsis infantiæ rudimentis sobrietati et pudicitiæ indulgens. . . . Accedunt plurimi formæ virginis excellentiam admirantes. . . . Innumeris ejus pulchritudo principibus complacebat: et venusta faciei ejus pulchritudo ad puellares promovebat amplexus." — Thom., *Eliens.*, § 4.

[141] "Postulatur a Tomberto principe . . . qui in amorem virginis totum animum informandum instituit. . . . Alligatur licet invita conjugali copulæ. . . . Desponsata matrem Domini meruit imitari. . . . In quorum copula

blessed Virgin Mary, and to consecrate herself wholly to God, resisted to the utmost the will of her father, and succeeded in preventing the consummation of her marriage during the three years that she passed with the tender and generous Tombert. He died; and the young widow supposed herself forever delivered from the matrimonial yoke, and free to give herself up to Christ. But it was not so. Egfrid, the son and heir of the great King of Northumbria, the most powerful prince of the Anglo-Saxon nation, became in his turn enamoured of her. Her resistance was as vain as in the first instance. The entreaties of her uncle, who had succeeded her father as King of East Anglia, and those of all her relations, compelled her to a second marriage, which no doubt seemed to them a new and precious pledge of alliance between the two kingdoms.[142] The impassioned Egfrid bestowed on her, in full sovereignty, considerable possessions, of which the vast territory of Hexham, which she afterwards gave to Wilfrid, formed part.

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When Wilfrid became bishop, he acquired at once, as has been seen, a great influence over the king, and the queen was not slow to show him still greater confidence and affection.[143] But what must have been the surprise and irritation of the young king, whom the powerful testimony of his contemporary Bede represents to us as very pious and highly beloved by God,[144] when he found that Etheldreda persisted, as in her former marriage, in keeping her virginity for God! Like the terrible Clotaire, the husband of St. Radegonde, a century previous, he found that he had married not a woman, but a nun.[145] But although he loved not less than Clotaire the wife who refused to belong to him, he respected and feared her more. She seemed to him more his lady and mistress than his equal and queen. Several years thus passed; the refusals of Etheldreda serving only to increase his passion. He then determined to apply to Wilfrid, well

non commixtione carnis unum corpus, sed, ut creditur, in Christo unus erat animus. . . . Ignara maritalis negotii, indefessis precibus apud Deum obtinuit, ut illam custodiret immaculatam." — *Ibid.*

[142] "Gaudebat solutam se esse in Christi libertate de jugo conjugii. . . . Ægfridus . . . inflammatur in amorem virginis, opes confert innumeras, dotesque spondet multiplices. . . . Principis petitio vehementius facta est . . . licet invita . . . adquievit unanimi parentum voluntati." — Thom., *Eliens.*, c. 4, 8.

[143] See above, p. 358. "Quem virgo regina præ omnibus in regno dilectum et electum habuerat." — *Id.*, c. 15.

[144] *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 24.

[145] "Dicebat se habere jugalem monacham, non reginam."

knowing what was the empire of the bishop over the conscience of Etheldreda, as well as over her heart, since he was the man for whom she had the greatest affection.[146] He offered him, as Wilfrid himself related to the venerable Bede, large estates and much money as the price of the queen's consent to his wishes. Bede only sees in Wilfrid on this occasion a witness to the incorruptible virginity of the saint. But, if we are to believe the official panegyrist of Etheldreda, it was Wilfrid who encouraged her in her resistance, while at first pretending to second the views of the king, in order to preserve his favor. In his secret conferences with her, he showed her heaven as the reward of her perseverance. She made to him the vow of chastity, and he then counselled her to ask from the king a formal separation, that she might consecrate herself to God in a monastery. Egfrid at first refused this absolutely; but after long disputes — after twelve years of so strange and stormy a union, vanquished by the prayers and tears of her whom he ever loved with so faithful a passion — he suffered a kind of consent to be torn from him to the departure of his unconquerable wife.[147]

[146] "Acriores Ægfrido stimulos adjicit, et ad copulam virginis feroces illius animos vehementer incendit . . . (sed) reginam impudice non tetigit, neque constristavit . . . quoniam non ut reginam aut parem, verum tanquam dominam per omnia venerabatur. . . . Tamen optat ille debitum a conjuge." — Thom., *Eliens.*, t. i. 8, 9.

[147] Respect for truth obliges me to give entire the text on which this singular history rests. In the first place that of the contemporary Bede, whose curiosity, at first incredulous, may be remarked; next that of the monk of Ely, who did not write until five centuries after the death of Etheldreda, but who lived in the monastery which she had founded, and surrounded with all the memorials which she had herself brought and left there, and which had passed from mouth to mouth until his time. "Data est regi præfato cujus consortio cum duodecim annis uteretur, perpetuæ tamen mansit virginitatis integritate gloriosa: sicut mihimet sciscitanti cum hoc an ita esset, quibusdam venisset in dubium beatæ memoriæ Wilfrid episcopus referebat; dicens se testem integritatis ejus esse certissimum: adeo ut Ægfridus promiserit se ei terras ac pecunias multas esse donaturum, si reginæ posset persuadere ejus uti connubio, quia sciebat illam nullum virorum plus illo diligere." — Bede, iv. 19. "Vidit ejus assiduam cum beato præsule familiaritatem. . . . Hinc Dei præconem rex frustra fatigat præmiis. . . . Wilfridus voti virginei fautor existens, vigilantis animi sagacitate procurabat, ne qua femineæ mentis inconstantia virgo mutaret. . . . Dissimulavit provide, tanquam regi favens et desiderii sui efficaciam reginæ persuadendam pollicens; veritus ne, sicut contigit, ob rem hujusce modi offensum illum haberet. . . . Sic Dei virtute prædita, per consilium sancti præsulis nullatenus regi assensum præbuit; egitque vir beatus sua industria ut potius divortium quæreret. . . . Princeps, nec facile adquiescit graviterque dolendum se asserit, si aliquando contingat a conjuge dilecta ferre divortium, licet ei nunquam conjunctus esset more conjugatorum. Postulat iterum regina, fletibus et diutinis postulationibus tanto importunius insistit. . . . Rex tandem victus ipsius importu-

She was no sooner furnished with this tardy and painful acquiescence in her wishes, than she hastened to Coldingham, to the great seaside monastery governed by Ebba, aunt of the king, and sister of his predecessors Oswald and Oswy.

Wilfrid gives her the veil at Coldingham.

Wilfrid very soon followed, to give her the veil and black robe, which should henceforward prove her new position as a nun.[148] Soon after, however, Egfrid followed her to her retreat; unable to endure her absence and the sacrifice she had imposed on him, he came with the furious determination of reclaiming her, and asserting his rights. The Abbess Ebba saw that she could not resist the violence of her nephew; she advised the queen, therefore, to flee. Etheldreda accordingly left Coldingham on foot, disguised in the dress of a poor woman, and accompanied by two brave nuns of the monastery. It did not occur to her to seek an asylum at Whitby, though the Abbess Hilda was her aunt. She must have known too well that that holy princess would encourage no enterprise in which Wilfrid had a share. She turned southward, through a thousand difficulties and adventures, towards the river which separated Northumbria from the rest of England, and having happily crossed that stream, she paused on the confines of her own country, East Anglia, in an estate which her first husband had given to her as her jointure.[149]

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Egfrid pursues her.

She flees to Ely.

Legends of the journey.

This long and fatiguing journey of the queen, disguised, and flying from her husband to bury herself in a cloister, touched deeply the imagination of the English people; and miraculous stories founded on it passed from mouth to mouth for ages, while they were also commemorated in the sculptured capitals and painted glass of

nis precibus, licet invitus, tamen eam dimisit invincibilem." — Thom., *Eliens.*, i. 9, 10. Let us add, finally, that Eddi, the disciple of Wilfrid, maintains a prudent and complete silence as to the intervention of his master in this delicate affair.

[148] "Accepto velamine sanctimonialis a Wilfrido." — Bede, l. c.

[149] "In veste humili . . . latitando incessit. . . . Per innumera itinerum discrimina et labores diversos . . . ut possessionem propriam, quam a Tomberto primo sponso ejus, jure dotis . . . perpetuo possidendam acceperat." — Thom., *Eliens.*, c. 15. This author continually appeals to the traditional evidences by which he was inspired: "Hoc in Beda nequaquam invenimus sed pro cunctorum usque nunc testimonio scribendum existimavimus. . . . Quicumque locum Coludi norunt, cum assertione hujus rei testes existunt. . . . Quæ ex priorum attestatione comperi, atque scriptura teste nosse contigit. . . . Res seniorum nostrorum relatione nobis tradita, quam omnis provincia in qua acciderat velut hesternum recitare solet et meminit." — C. 9, 11, 12, 13.

the great monastic churches.[150] Pious pilgrimages were made to the promontory washed by the sea, on which, in the first stage of her journey, pursued by Egfrid, she took refuge with her companions, and round which the tide rose so high as to render it inaccessible for seven consecutive days, until the king, discouraged, abandoned the pursuit.[151] And the pilgrims pointed out to each other the spot where, travelling on foot on a day of great heat, she fell asleep from fatigue on the open plain. Its position was marked by a majestic ash, the largest tree in the district, which was believed to have been the travelling staff which the royal traveller had thrust into the ground while she slept, and which she found at her waking already covered with verdure; an emblem of the great monastery in the shade of which she was destined to pass the rest of her days, and to shelter, among many others, her friend and protector Wilfrid.[152]

Establishment and monastic life at Ely.

The lands she possessed in right of her first husband were very extensive, since they supported nearly six hundred families. Their position was almost that of an island, surrounded by fens, which could only be crossed in boats. This island was called Ely, or the Isle of Eels.[153] It is a name to be found on every page of the political and religious history of England.[154] Etheldreda built a monastery there, which grew into speedy greatness, and where many Anglo-Saxon virgins joined her, among whom were a number of princesses of her family, having at their head her sister, the Queen of Kent. Mothers confided their daughters to her to educate. Even men, and among them many priests, selected her also for their guide and mistress in the spiritual life. Many of the officials of her household followed her example when she quitted the throne

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[150] For example, on the capitals of the beautiful Cathedral of Ely, in 1342.

[151] "Mare suum alveum egrediens . . . locum, in quem sacræ virgines ascenderant, circumdedit, et sicut ab incolis loci accepimus, per septem continuos dies eas occuluit . . . solitos recursus obliviscens, quamdiu rex illic aut penes locum mirabatur." — *Ibid.*, c. 11. This rocky cape is still called, as in the time of Thomas, Colbert's Head.

[152] "De somno evigilata . . . invenit baculum itineris sui . . . jam viridi amicta cortice fronduisse . . . facta est fraxinus maxima . . . quam ex nostris adhuc plures viderunt." — *Ibid.*, c. 13. This place was called, in Anglo-Saxon, *Ædeldrethestowe*, Etheldreda's Rest.

[153] "A copia anguillarum quæ in iisdem paludibus capiuntur." — Bede, c. 1.

[154] After having been destroyed by the Danes, Ely became an abbey of monks, and was erected into a bishopric in 1108. Its cathedral, of which we shall speak later, is one of the marvels of Anglo-Norman architecture.

Her major-domo, Owin.

and the world to devote herself to God. The chief of these officials, who may be regarded as the queen's major-domo, was an East Anglian lord, named Owin, a man of faith and of amiable disposition, who had been attached to her from her cradle, had accompanied her from East Anglia to Northumbria, and had no desire to remain in the world after her and without her. He abandoned his honors and possessions, and, putting on a poor man's dress, went with a mattock and axe on his shoulder, and knocked at the door of the monastery where Abbot Ceadda lived, at Lichfield in Mercia. "I come here," he said, "to seek, not rest, as some do, but work. I am not worth much for meditation or study, but I will do as much manual labor as you like; and while the bishop reads in his cell I will take care of the work outside.[155] Others of her servants joined Etheldreda at Ely, where she soon found herself at the head of one of those double communities of men and women, or rather of brethren and sisters, which played so important a part in history at the epoch of which we are speaking.[156]

She gave them, during the seven years she passed at their head, an example of all monastic virtues, and especially of zeal in fasting and prayer. Few details exist of this period of her existence, but the holiness of that life must have left deep traces in the memory of Anglo-Saxon Christians to have enabled it to triumph over time and human forgetfulness beyond that of any other woman of the race. Among her austerities, the greatest wonder was that so great a lady should wear nothing but woollen instead of linen garments, and that she took a bath only on the four great feasts of the year, and even then, after the rest of the community.[157]

Wilfrid continues to direct her.

Wilfrid never gave up his care of Etheldreda. As soon as he knew of her arrival at Ely he hastened thither.[158] It was he who instituted her

[155] "Ovini monachus magni meriti et pura intentione . . . eratque primus ministrorum et princeps domus ejus. . . . Securim atque asciam in manu ferens. . . . Non ad otium, ut quidam, sed ad laborem." — BEDE, iv. 3. Cf. BOLLAND., *die 4 Martii*. This Owin is the monk who attended Bishop Ceadda in his last moments. See above, p. 349. He himself is reckoned among the saints, and the Bollandists have consecrated an article to him in their volume i. of March. Bede relates the story of another of Etheldreda's officers — her cupbearer — who, after having been made a prisoner, and sold as a slave in the market at London to a Frisian, was bought back by the King of Kent, nephew of Etheldreda.

[156] THOM., *Eliens.*, c. 15, 18, 22, and 23.

[157] BEDE, iv. 19.

[158] "Beatæ virginis non immemor, nec se a vicissitudine dilectionis illius

abbess, who gave the veil to her nuns, and who regulated all that concerned the government and interests, temporal or spiritual, of the new community. He paid her frequent visits, and never ceased to give consolation and enlightenment to her for whom he must have felt more than ever responsible, since he had encouraged her to sacrifice the obligations of conjugal life to follow the path of supernatural virtue.

However touching and dramatic this history may be, it appears happily certain that no one in the Catholic Church would now authorize or approve the conduct of Wilfrid. It is not less certain that no one of his own time seems to have blamed him. Without any desire of judging him severely, it is evident that these events had no fortunate influence upon him. His life, hitherto agitated, but glorious and prosperous, became, after the consecration of Etheldreda, nothing but a tissue of trials and tempests. First of all, the intimate and fruitful union which had existed between him and the king of his country, was broken beyond remedy. Egfrid never pardoned him for his deceit, for having interfered in his domestic life, only to destroy its charm, and for having used his influence to encourage the wife whom he loved to desert him; and he long nourished his resentment in silence, waiting and preparing for the day when he might despoil him of his episcopal see.[159]

Rupture between Wilfrid and Egfrid;

But the direct instrument of the rupture between them and of the disasters of Wilfrid, was the second wife of Egfrid, she who, thanks to Wilfrid, and to him alone, had taken the place of St. Etheldreda on the throne, and in the heart of the sovereign of Northumbria. This princess, Ermenburga, was a sister-in-law of the King of the West Saxons. It was she, if we may believe the companion and biographer of Wilfrid, by whom the perfidious enemy of the Christian flock chose to work,

Provoked especially by the new queen, Ermenburga.

excludens, ut eam in Ely descendisse cognoverat, festinus advolat." — THOM., c. 16. Cf. 15 and 19. "A quo ipsa plurimum regendi consilium et vitæ solatium habuit."

[159] "Nec deinceps confessorem Domini Wilfridum a secretis seu affectis ut antea coluit, sed iram diu tacito contra illum sub pectore gessit; et expectata hora, ob istius modi causam, eum de sede sui episcopatus expulit." — THOM., *Eliens.*, l. i. c. 11. Bede, the contemporary of Wilfrid, and who had questioned him with regard to the story of Etheldreda (iv. 19), simply mentions the rupture without alluding to its motives; he shows otherwise in all that regards the conflicts of Wilfrid with kings and bishops a singular reserve, very rare with him.

according to his custom of employing the weakness of women to corrupt the human race.

This wicked Jezebel, continues our ardent musician, drew from her quiver the most poisoned arrows to pierce the heart of the king, and to provoke him to a furious envy of the great bishop. With the eloquence of hatred she represented to him the shameless pomp and luxury displayed on every occasion by the Bishop of York: his immense riches, his services of gold and silver, the increasing number of his monasteries, the vast grandeur of his buildings, his innumerable army of dependants and vassals, better armed and better clothed perhaps than those of the king. She pointed out to him besides how many abbots and abbesses either gave up to him during their lives the government of their communities, or solemnly constituted him their heir; so that the moment might be foreseen when all those estates, given by the generosity of the Northumbrians to the sanctuaries of the new religion, would become the appanage of one man.[160] Such arguments could not but aggravate the resentment of a heart wounded by the desertion of a wife passionately regretted, and to whom another wife pointed out the way of vengeance.

Archbishop Theodore takes part with them.

The husband and wife thus decided upon the destruction of Wilfrid; but not daring to attack him directly, they had the art to engage the Archbishop Theodore in their plans, and to strike their enemy, the great champion of Rome, by the hand of the direct and supreme representative of Roman authority in England. Eddi distinctly accuses the primate of having been bribed by the King and Queen of Northumbria.[161] It is repugnant to our minds to admit such an accusation against a saint

[160] "Consueta arma arripiens, vasa fragilia mulierbria quæsivit. . . . De pharetra sua venenatas sagittas venefica in cor regis, quasi impiissima Jezabel, per auditum verberum emisit, enumerans ei eloquenter . . . innumeramque copiosum exercitum regalibus vestimentis et armis ornatum. . . . Namque pæne omnes abbates et abbatissæ cœnobiorum, aut sub suo nomine secum substantias custodientes, aut post obitum suum hæredem illum habere optantes vota voverunt." — Eddius, c. 23, 20. "Quod aureis et argenteis vasis sibi ministrari faceret." — Guill. Malmesb., f. 148.

[161] "Ad auxilium sum vesaniæ archiepiscopum Theodorum cum muneribus, quæ excæcant etiam sapientium oculos . . . invitaverunt. Venientes vero ad eos quid mente agerent in contemptu ejus patefacientes, et sine aliquo culpandi piaculo inique damnare consensit." — Eddius, c. 23. William of Malmesbury, in the twelfth century, repeats this account. The Bollandists do not admit that Theodore was corrupted, but do not hesitate to accuse him of culpable connivance with the enemies of Wilfrid. — *Act. SS.*, vol. vi Sept., p. 62.

placed in the Roman calendar side by side with St. Wilfrid. We can more easily believe that the archbishop suffered himself to be led away by an apprehension of the too great power of Wilfrid, and above all, by a perfectly legitimate desire to put in execution his project for augmenting and better dividing the English dioceses. It is also almost certain that he allowed himself to be influenced by a kind of Celtic reaction, the movers of which did not attempt to return to anti-Roman usages, but only to punish in Wilfrid the destroyer of their ancient ritual and their recent conqueror.

He deposes Wilfrid, and divides his diocese into three.

Accordingly, during one of Wilfrid's numerous absences, Theodore came to York, and using, or abusing, the supremacy with which the Pope had invested him, he deposed Wilfrid, and also divided the diocese of York or Northumbria into three new dioceses. Nothing could be more significant of the spirit which animated him than his choice of bishop for these new dioceses, who were all monks taken from the ancient Celtic monasteries, who, while recognizing Roman customs, had still repelled the Roman customs, had still repelled the Roman bishop.[162] One of these new sees naturally remained at York; there the archbishop placed Bosa, since venerated as a saint, whom he found in the community of Whitby,[163] and consequently of the school of the Abbess Hilda, always so hostile to Wilfrid. By a refinement of animosity, the capital of the second diocese was placed at Hexham, precisely in that great monastery which Wilfrid had created with such magnificence. The bishop placed there was the abbot of the Celtic novitiate of Melrose, that very Eata who had been superior of the Scottish community, formerly displaced from Ripon to make room for Wilfrid.[164] The third diocese, which comprehended that part of Mercia recently conquered by the Northumbrian king, was also confided to a Celtic monk, who had been the companion of Ceadda when he replaced Wilfrid after his first deposition by Oswy.[165] Finally, as if to add a touch of derision to violence

[162] "Tres episcopos aliunde inventos, et non de subjectis illius parochiæ . . . inordinate solus ordinavit." — Eddius, c. 29.

[163] Bede, iv. 12, 28. Bosa is honored (November 2) in the English martyrology.

[164] See above, p. 313.

[165] Bede, iii. 28; iv. 12. This monk was named Eadhed. He was afterwards placed by Theodore at Ripon, in order to neutralize the influence of Wilfrid in his earliest foundation.

a fourth diocese was carved out, according to several authors, in the vast territories of Northumbria, having for its chief seat Lindisfarne, the sanctuary and asylum of the Celtic spirit. This miserable relic of his extinct greatness it was proposed to leave to Wilfrid, thus taking care to place him in the midst of his adversaries.[166]

All these measures bore the unmistakable mark of a Celtic reaction; but the archbishop gave as his reason that the diocese was large enough to give occupation to four bishops, and that its revenues furnished sufficient support for three instead of ministering to the luxury of one.[167]

Wilfrid appeals to Rome.

At the first report of this attempt on the rights of the Church and his own, Wilfrid hurried home, and summoned the king and the archbishop publicly to explain their motives for having thus despoiled him not only of his ecclesiastical authority, but also of the lands which he held as the gift of the reigning king, his father and brother. "It is," he said to them, "mere robbery." The two potentates simply replied, "We have no crime with which to reproach you, but we will not change any part of the judgment we have delivered." "Then," replied Wilfrid, "I appeal to the judgment of the Holy See." [168] It was the first time that an appeal to Rome had been heard of in Eng-

[166] It appears more probable, according to Bede, that this diocese of Lindisfarne was not created, or rather renewed, until 681; but, supposing it to have been in 678, it is certain that Wilfrid did not then accept the government, as he did some years later. We must not, like Fleury, confound this diocese of Lindisfarne, situated in Bernicia, north of Northumbria, with that of Lindisfari, created by Theodore, and which comprehended the province of Lindsey (now Lincolnshire), a division of Mercia. In 681, Theodore finished his work, and created — quite to the north of the country conquered by the Anglo-Saxons, on the banks of the Forth — a last diocese, which he placed in the Monastery of Abercorn, and which was to comprise all the Picts subject to Northumbrian rule. The land to the north of the Humber was thus divided into five dioceses — York, Ripon, Hexham, Lindisfarne, and Abercorn; the twelve dioceses subject to the metropolis of York, of which Gregory had prescribed the foundation to Augustin, still lay far in the future. But Theodore did not intend to create in the north a rival metropolis to his own. On the other hand, he multiplied dioceses south of the Humber; he divided the immense diocese of Mercia into six — *Lichfield*, Leicester, *Hereford*, *Worcester*, Sydnacester, and Dorchester, since transferred to *Lincoln*. Of these six, the four whose names are in italics still exist.

[167] "Prætendebat causam justitiæ ut inde tres alerentur episcopi, unde unus tumebat." — Guill. Malmesb., f. 149.

[168] "Interrogans quid causæ esset, ut . . . prædonum more defraudarent. . . . Illi responderunt famosum verbum dicentes coram omni populo: Nullam criminis culpam in aliquo nocendi tibi adscribimus sed tamen statuta de te judicia non mutabimus."

land; but Wilfrid recalled St. Paul's "I appeal until Cæsar." The step he thus took was a prelude to those great appeals and solemn struggles which, after the Norman Conquest, stirred all the West, and gave so much celebrity to the pontificates of St. Anselm and St. Thomas of Canterbury.

As he passed out of the royal assembly where he had thus signified his refusal to obey, he turned towards certain flatterers of the prince who were enjoying and laughing at his disgrace. "On this day next year," he said to them, "you who now laugh at my expense shall weep bitterly at your own." And in fact next year, on the very same day, all the people of York were tearing their hair and their garments in token of mourning, as the funeral procession of the young brother and heir of Egfrid passed through their city. This young prince, who was scarcely eighteen years of age, and already dear to the Anglo-Saxons, had been the guest of Wilfrid at the solemn dedication of Ripon: he perished in a war against the Mercians, the beginning of a series of defeats which lasted during all the remainder of the hitherto prosperous reign of Egfrid.[169]

All the saints and chief abbots of his country are hostile or indifferent to him.

The cowardly animosity of these courtiers against the haughty and intrepid prelate is, however, much less surprising than the fact that, incontestably, Wilfrid met with no aid and no sympathy among the great and holy churchmen who were his contemporaries. Not only did the illustrious Abbess Hilda, protectress of the Celtic ritual, remain always relentlessly, implacably hostile to him,[170] but not one of the abbots whom his example had imbued with the Roman and Benedictine spirit came to his succor; neither Benedict Biscop, who was as much Roman at heart, and by his numerous pilgrimages to Rome, as Wilfrid himself; nor the pious, humble, and austere Cuthbert, whose sanctity was already known in the very country and diocese of Wilfrid, and nourished through many ages the popular devotion of northern England. Except his own personal followers, very numerous indeed, and warmly attached to him, all that Northumbria in which the Celtic apostles had wrought so many wonders, re-

[169] "Adulatoribus dixit: Hoc anniversario die, qui nunc ridetis in meam pro invidia condemnationem, tunc in vestra confusione amare flebitis." — Eddius, c. 23. Cf. Bede, iv. 21.

[170] "Ut putant sit quanta miseria involvat mortales, quod illi viri quos sanctissimos celebrat antiquitas, Theodorus, Berthwaldus, Johannes, Bosa, nec non et Hilda abbatissa digladiabili odio impetierint Wilfridum." — Guill. Malmesb., f. 152. Cf. Faber, p. 88.

mained either hostile or profoundly indifferent. This indifference and hostility of the country, arising, no doubt, from an excessive susceptibility of national sentiment, is again apparent at a later date in the histories of Anselm and Thomas à Becket. It is a point of resemblance between these illustrious men and the first great bishop of the English race which must strike every observer.

The modern reader will not be less astonished at the ignorance of the Anglo-Saxon Church in the most elementary rules of canonical law as to the institution and immovability of bishops. When St. Wilfrid was superseded at York for the first time, without trial, before he had even taken possession, St. Chad accepted his see without hesitation; and other saints — Cuthbert, Bosa, and John of Beverley — afterwards followed his example, while the Metropolitan of Canterbury, himself inscribed in the Roman calendar, consecrated all these intruders. When the Holy See intervened on behalf of the law, its decrees met with but a tardy or equivocal acquiescence. But such causes of astonishment, too often awakened by the conscientious study of history, ought not to trouble sincere and serious minds. If the dogmas and morals taught by the Church have never varied, it has required many centuries to give to her discipline and government that form which now appears to us the only regular one. To expect in primitive times, and among young and restless nations, to find the monarchical concentration or uniform docility which, in our days, characterized the exercise of ecclesiastical authority, is to fall into the same error as those simple historians, lately so common among us, who mete out the royalty of Clovis or St. Louis by the measure of the monarchy of Louis XIV.

CHAPTER IV.

JUSTICE DONE TO WILFRID AT ROME: IN ENGLAND HE IS DEPOSED, IMPRISONED, EXILED, AND RESTORED.—678-686.

Wilfrid himself carries his cause to Rome. — A storm lands him in Friesland, where he evangelizes the people. — He thus becomes the first of the Anglo-Saxon apostles of Germany. — Generosity of the King of the Frisians and King of the Lombards, both of whom refuse to deliver him up to

Ebroïn. — Wilfrid in Austrasia: Dagobert II. — Wilfrid at Rome. — Theodore and Hilda denounce him to the Pope St. Agathon. His cause is tried by a council at which the Pope presides. He obtains justice; but the principle of the division of dioceses is maintained, and the authority of the primate confirmed. Wilfrid hears at Rome of the death of Etheldreda. — He is present at the Council against the Monothelites, and bears witness to the faith of all the Churches of the British Isles. — He returns o England with the Papal charter for Peterborough. — He is repulsed by the king and assembly of the Northumbrians, and then imprisoned. — Connivance of Archbishop Theodore. —Wilfrid refuses to treat with the king. — He is put in irons at Dunbar: afterwards delivered by the intervention of the Abbess Edda of Coldingham, but exiled. — Obliged to leave Mercia and Wessex, where the brothers-in-law of Egfrid reign, he takes refuge among the Saxons of the South, whom he converts to Christianity. — He teaches them to fish with nets, and frees the serfs on the domains of his new Abbey of Selsey. — His connection with the proscribed Ceadwalla, who becomes King of Wessex, and afterwards dies at Rome. — Theodore again disposes of the diocese of Wilfrid: St. Cuthbert is made Bishop of Lindisfarne. — King Egfrid ravages Ireland cruelly: in spite of the entreaties of Bishop Cuthbert he invades Caledonia, and perishes there. — Queen Ermenburga, informed by Cuthbert of the death of her husband, becomes a nun. — Consequences of the defeat of Egfrid. — The Saxon bishop of the Picts takes refuge at Whitby, where Elfleda, sister of Egfrid, had succeeded Hilda. — Archbishop Theodore acknowledges his faults towards Wilfrid: he wishes to choose him as his successor: writes in his favor to the King of the Mercians and to the Abbess Elfleda. — Connection of Elfleda with Bishop Cuthbert. — Aldfrid, long an exile at Iona, becomes King of Northumbria. — Wilfrid is recalled and re-established in his diocese. — Storms raised by him at Lindisfarne, which he abandons to another bishop. — Death of Archbishop Theodore.

Having decided that he would himself carry his appeal to Rome, Wilfrid left Northumbria, accompanied by his friend the chorister Eddi, and by a numerous train of clergy and laymen, who never left him. He left behind thousands of monks, initiated by him into the rule of St. Benedict, and now in despair at finding themselves under the authority of new bishops strange to Benedictine traditions, and animated by a spirit totally opposed to that of their beloved superior.[171] His route towards the Continent led him through the kingdoms of Mercia and East Anglia, the princes and people of which were always favorable to him; and when he stopped at the great monasteries, at Peterborough, of which he re-

[171] "Multa millia monachorum suorum sub manu episcoporum novitei ordinatorum, relinquens, mœrentes et flentes." — Eddius, c. 24.

garded himself as one of the founders, and, above all, at Ely, where he had often dwelt, and where Etheldreda always received him as her bishop, she commissioned him to obtain for her at Rome one of those acts of privilege which were earnestly sought by monastic establishments as their most efficient safeguard against the usurpations and violences which menaced them on all sides.[172]

It was supposed by his enemies, who increased every day in number and bitterness, that he would take the ordinary route of pilgrims to Rome, landing in the neighborhood of Boulogne at Etaples, and going through France. They therefore sent messages and gifts to the atrocious Ebroïn, who, stained as he was by the blood of St. Leger and many other victims, still governed, as mayor of the palace, the provinces of Neustria and Burgundy. Knowing him to be capable of any crime, they begged him to lay hands on Wilfrid on his journey, rob him of all that he carried with him, and free them from the chance of his return.[173] But whether Wilfrid was warned of his danger, or whether he was simply guided by the west wind which rose while he was at sea — this wind saved his life, carrying him, and with him the first seeds of the Christian faith, to the low and marshy shores of Friesland.[174]

Mission of Wilfrid into Friesland.

He is thus the first of the Anglo-Saxon apostles of Germany.

The Frisians then occupied all the north-east of Germany. They were a warlike, numerous, and formidable people, of whom mention will often be made in the after history of monastic missions. The Gospel was then unknown to them, and Wilfrid, who had been the beginner of so many things, had also the glory of opening the way to those Anglo-Saxon apostles of Germany whose long and glorious annals we have yet to unfold. Wilfrid, who was hospitably received by the king of the country and its inhabitants, had no sooner

[172] "Apud Ely cum beatissima Etheldretha morabatur, ubi tunc et quotiens necessitas poposcerat, quoad vixit, officii jura episcopalis administravit. . . . Monasterium per dilectum suum Wilfridum Romæ nutu apostolico corroborandum destinavit. . . . Accepit privilegium . . . ut optaverat et cum rogaverat mater insignis Etheldretha." — Thom. Eliensis, c. 15, 19.

[173] The similarity of name between Wilfrid and Winfrid, bishop of Lichfield, must have been fatal to the latter. Having been deposed by the metropolitan Theodore, "per meritum cujusdam inobedientiæ," he also was going to France, and perhaps to Rome, when the satellites of Ebroïn fell upon him, killed his companion, and left him naked, "errore bono unius syllabæ seducti," says Eddi, who judges of good and evil only as they affect the interests of his hero. — Cf. Bede, iv. 3, 6.

[174] "Flante Favonio pulsus est." — Bede, iv. 19. Cf. Eddius, p. 25.

landed on the unknown coast than he took advantage of the kindness shown him to begin a new evangelical mission. With the self-devotion and enthusiasm natural to him, he forgot the grave personal interests which were leading him to Rome in his eagerness to give himself up to this new work. He remained there a whole winter, 678 679. preaching daily, with the permission of the king, Adalgisus, and with a success which repaid his toil. The year proved more than usually abundant in fish and other provisions, and this the Frisians attributed to the new God who was preached to them.[175] Nearly all their chiefs were baptized, with many thousands of the people.

Generosity of the King of the Frisians.

Meantime Ebroïn was on the watch, with no inclination to let the rich prey of which he had been informed escape from him. Having heard of Wilfrid's residence in Friesland, he sent messengers to the king with very friendly letters, in which he promised him by oath a bushel of gold coins if he would send him Bishop Wilfrid alive, or even his head. Adalgisus had all the repugnance to secrecy which had been noticed by Tacitus among the princes of Germanic race, who love to discuss their affairs at feasts, since at such a moment the heart is most frank and open, most prone to generous impulses, and least apt to dissimulate.[176] The King of the Frisians accordingly collected all his people at a great banquet, together with his different guests; on the one side the emissaries of Ebroïn, on the other Wilfrid and his followers, amongst whom was Eddi, who has described the scene. After the banquet, he caused the letter of the powerful minister of the Franks to be read aloud. When this was finished he took the letter, tore it up, and threw the pieces into the fire, saying to those who had brought it, "Go and tell your master what you have seen, and add that I have said, 'Thus may the Creator tear, destroy, and consume the perjurer and traitor!'"[177] It is evident that chivalry was just bursting from the bud

[175] "Doctrina ejus secundum paganos bene adjuvavit, erat enim in adventu eorum eo tempore solito amplius in piscatione et in omnibus frugifer annus." — Eddius, c. 25.

[176] "Plerumque in conviviis consultant: tanquam nullo magis tempore aut ad simplices cogitationes pateat animus, aut ad magnas incalescat. . . . Deliberant dum fingere nesciunt.' — *De Moribus Germaniæ*, c. 22.

[177] "Modium plenum solidorum aureorum. . . . Rex, præsentibus nobis, et nuntiis coram populo suo in palatio epulantibus, omnibusque audientibus. . . . Enuntiate domino vestro hoc modo me dicentem: Sic rerum Creator regnum et vitam in Deo suo perjurantes, factumque nullum non custodientes scindens destruat, et consumens in favillam devellat!" — Eddius, c. 26.

among these new Christians. Wilfrid, however, could only stay to reap a first and rapid harvest. He had left in his monastery at Ripon a young Northumbrian, brought to him in infancy by his mother, whom he had carefully educated for thirteen years. And it was for this child, a faithful disciple of the great exile, since venerated by the Churches of England and Germany under the name of Willebrord, that God reserved the glory of bringing permanently into the ranks of Christianity this warlike nation.[178]

679. Wilfrid in Austrasia.

Wilfrid resumed his journey towards Rome in spring, crossing Austrasia where the throne was occupied by a prince who had occasion to know the generous hospitality of the Abbot of Ripon. This was Dagobert II., grandson of the first king of that name, who, dethroned in infancy by Grimoald, mayor of the palace, was sent secretly to Ireland, where he found refuge in a monastery; but when in 673 the Austrasian nobles determined to escape the yoke of Ebroïn, who was already master of Neustria and Burgundy, they recalled the tonsured prince whose brilliant youth, according to travellers, blossomed in a Hibernian cloister. It was to Wilfrid that they addressed themselves for the restoration of the royal exile; and it was Wilfrid who, after having magnificently received and entertained him at Ripon, sent him on his way to Austrasia with large presents and a great escort.[179] Dagobert showed his gratitude not only by giving him an affectionate reception, but by his entreaties to Wilfrid to accept the bishopric of Strasbourg, then vacant, and the most important in the kingdom.

656.

Where he refuses the bishopric of Strasbourg.

Wilfrid, however, refused, and pursuing his route, arrived in Lombardy, where he was most hospitably

[178] Wilfrid always maintained his connection with Friesland. A curious story, told by Bede (iii. 13), which describes the veneration of their national saint, King Oswald, introduced by the Northumbrian missionaries, seems to indicate that Wilfrid himself visited the country a second time in one of his later voyages with Willebrord and his successor Acca. M. Albertingk Thym, in his recent and curious account of St. Willebrord, does not resolve this question. But the Bollandists (vol. vi. Sept., p. 68) decide that Wilfrid, in returning from Rome twenty years after his second voyage, passed through Friesland, and that he may then have been accompanied by Willibrord and Acca. Fourteen years after his first stay in Friesland in 692, it was to Wilfrid that they sent Bishop Swidbert, another Saxon missionary, to be consecrated. — Bede, v. 11.

[179] "Amici et propinqui ejus viventem et in perfecta ætate florentem a navigantibus audientes, misere nuntios ad B. Wilfridum, petentes ut eum de Scotia et Hibernia ad se invitasset et sibi ad regem emisisset." — Eddius, c. 27.

received by Berchtaire, king of that country.[180] There, also, he had been anticipated by the enmity of his countrymen, and once more the great bishop owed his life to the honor and good faith of a barbarian, but already Christian, prince. He said to Wilfrid, "Your enemies have sent to me from England, with promises of great presents if I will prevent you by violence from proceeding to Rome; for they treat you as a fugitive bishop. I have replied to them thus: 'I was myself exiled from my country in my youth, and lived with a king of the Avares, who was a pagan, and who swore before his idol not to deliver me up to my enemies. Some time afterwards they sent to offer this pagan king a bushel of gold if he would give me up to them. He refused, saying that his gods would break the thread of his life if he broke his oath. With better reason I, who know the true God, will not lose my soul were it to gain the whole world.'"[181] Having said this he gave Wilfrid and his people an honorable escort which guarded them all the way to Rome.

The King of the Lombards refuses the offers of his enemies.

Thus on the north and south of that mass of Germanic nations just touched by Christianity, there flashed out at Wilfrid's touch sparks of that generous loyalty which afterwards developed into Christian honor, and the lofty ideal, ever inaccessible yet ever desired and pursued, of chivalry. Wilfrid may be congratulated on having been one of the first to awaken in the history of our forefathers the premonitory signs of this magnificent dawn.

At the moment when Wilfrid arrived at Rome for the second time — returning persecuted but famous to the city which he had left twenty years before obscure and unknown — the chair of St. Peter was occupied by a Sicilian monk named Agathon: since the time of St. Gregory the Great, all the monasteries of Italy and Sicily followed the rule of St. Benedict, and, consequently, we cannot doubt that he was a Benedictine. Accordingly it was natural that he should be favorably disposed towards the Bishop of York, in whom he found at once the propagator of Benedictine rule and the champion of Ro-

Wilfrid at Rome. 679.

The Pope Agathon a monk.

[180] It is apparent from the introduction to the text of Eddi published by Mabillon, that the latter and Adrian de Valois take this to prove that the country described by Eddi as *Campania* was no other than Lombardy.

[181] "Fui aliquando in die juventutis meæ exsul de patria expulsus, sub pagano quodam rege . . . qui iniit mecum fœdus in deo suo idolo. . . . Ego quanto magis, qui Deum meum scio, animam meam pro totius mundi lucro in perditionem non dabo." — EDDIUS, c. 27.

man authority. But he also showed great consideration for Wilfrid's antagonist, Archbishop Theodore, whom he had just summoned to Rome by a special envoy, for the council convoked against the Monothelite heresy. Theodore did not obey the summons of the Pope, but he sent a very exemplary monk named Coënwald with letters full of violent accusations against Wilfrid.[182] Messengers charged with a similar commission arrived from the Abbess of Whitby, St. Hilda, still embittered against him who had won the day in the great struggle carried on in the very bosom of her monastery fifteen years before. This singular intervention of the great abbess, which is recorded and proved by a pontifical rescript a quarter of a century after the event,[183] shows at once the great place she held in the English Church, and the intensity of her resentment against Wilfrid.

Wilfrid's cause is judged by council at which the Pope presides.

The Pope confided the judgment of the affair to an assembly of fifty bishops and priests collected in the Basilica of the Saviour, at which he himself presided. The companion of Wilfrid has left us a kind of official account of the last session of this assembly, which shows, under the profusion of superlatives then used in all the documents of the Roman Court,[184] an indulgent sympathy for both the rivals, together with the moderation and impartiality natural to the Head of the Church.

The cardinal-bishops of Ostia and Porto made a report to this assembly, equally founded upon the memorials sent by Theodore and others, in which Wilfrid was spoken of as a fugitive bishop, and on those which Wilfrid himself produced for his defence. They concluded thus: — "All being considered, we do not find him convicted canonically of any crime which merits deposition: on the contrary, we perceive that he has preserved great moderation, and has excited no sedition by which to regain his position. He has contented himself with protesting in presence of the other bishops his brethren, and has then had recourse to the Holy See, where Christ, who purchased the Holy Church by His blood, has

[182] "Modestæ religionis monachus. . . . Accusationes scriptas deferens et amaritudine delationis verbis immitibus." — Guill. Malmesb., f. 149.

[183] See the letter of Pope John VI. quoted by Eddius (c. 51), written to the Kings of Northumbria and Mercia in 705.

[184] The Pope is always described as "sanctissimus et ter beatissimus," and Theodore as "sanctissimus;" Wilfrid is only named with the epithet "Deo amabilis." The violent Eddi himself is won by this example, and while he transcribes this document he treats Theodore as a saint, and his envoy Coënwald as "religiosus monachus."

founded the primacy of the priesthood." The pope then said, "Wilfrid, Bishop of York, is at the door of the hall of our secret deliberations with his petition — let him enter." The bishop being introduced, begged that his prayer should be again read in full assembly. It was expressed in terms equally able and touching: "I, Wilfrid, the humble and unworthy Bishop of the Saxons, have taken refuge here as in an impregnable fortress. I have climbed, by the grace of God, to this apostolic summit, from whence flows to all the Churches of Christ the rule of the holy canonical law; and I have a hope that justice will here be rendered to my humbleness. I have already explained, *viva voce* and in writing, how, without being convicted of any fault, I have been expelled from the diocese which I have governed for ten years; and how they have put in my place, not one bishop only, but three bishops, contrary to the canons. I do not dare to accuse the most holy Archbishop Theodore, because he has been sent by the Church. I submit myself here to your apostolic judgment. If you decide that I am no longer worthy to be a bishop, I humbly accept the sentence; if I am to reclaim my bishopric, I shall obey equally. I implore you only to expel, by the authority of this council, the usurpers of my diocese. If the archbishop, and the bishops my brethren, see fit to augment the number of bishops, let them choose such as I can live amicably with, and let them be elected with the consent of a council, and taken from the clergy of their future dioceses, so that the Church may not be ruled from without and by strangers. At the same time, confiding absolutely in apostolic justice, I shall obey implicitly its decrees."

After this speech, the Pope congratulated Wilfrid on his moderation and humility. Then the council decreed that Wilfrid should be restored to his see; that those who had replaced him should be expelled; but that the archbishop should ordain bishops with the title of coadjutors, bishops chosen by Wilfrid himself in a council assembled for that purpose. All this was commanded under pain of interdict, deposition, and anathema, against whosoever might oppose this decree, whether bishop, priest, deacon, monk, layman, or even king.[185] He obtains justice.

[185] "Agatho . . . dicit: 'Wilfridus Deo amabilis episcopus . . . præ foribus nostri secretarii moratus, ad nostrum secretarium juxta suam postulationem cum petitione, quam secum adfere licitus est, ammittatur.' Wilfridus . . . dixit: 'Deprecor vestram pontificalem Beatitudinem ut meæ

This sentence was a most wise and legitimate decision; for, while giving full satisfaction to that justice which had been outraged in the person of Wilfrid, it enforced, on the terms he had himself accepted, the evidently reasonable principle of the division of his overgrown diocese.

The council of Rome confirms the authority of Theodore

Besides this, the same assembly, probably in the same session, rendered full justice to the apostolic zeal of Archbishop Theodore, by prescribing a new arrangement of bishoprics, so that the metropolitan might have twelve suffragans, canonically elected and ordained, of whom none should interfere with the rights of his neighbor It also sanctioned the prohibitions decreed by the archbishop, who forbade ecclesiastics to bear arms, and to mingle in secular amusements with female musicians and other profane persons. Finally, the Pope and the council charged Theodore to complete the work of St. Gregory and St. Augustin, by convoking an assembly, wherein the kings, princes, nobles, and leaders of the country might confer with the prelates, and where they could provide for the exact observance of apostolic rules. It was also recommended to him to hold assemblies of this kind as frequently as possible, in order to provide, in concert with the faithful and the wisest men of the kingdom, for those measures most advantageous to the Church and people of God.[185]

humilitatis petitionem excipi coramque relegi præcipiatis. . . . Quid acciderit ut Theodorus sanctissimus me superstite in sedem quam . . . dispensabam . . . ordinaret episcopos, omittere magis quam flagitare pro ejus Dei viri reverentia condecet; quem eo quod ab hac apostolica sede directus est, accusare non audeo.' . . . Si placuerit archiepiscopo et coepiscopis meis ut augeatur numerus episcoporum, tales eligant de ipso clero Ecclesiæ, quales in synodo placeat congregatis episcopis, ut non a foris et alienis dominetur Ecclesia. . . . Si quis proinde contra horum statutorum synodalium decreta ausu temerario obsistere tentaverit . . . ex auctoritate B. Petri . . . eum hac sanctione percellendum censemus, ut, si episcopus est . . . sed ab episcopali ordine destitutus, et æterni anathematis reus; similiter si presbyter . . . si vero clericus, monachus vel laicus cujuslibet ditionis, vel rex: extraneus efficiatur et corpore et sanguine Christi: nec terribilem ejus adventum dignus appareat conspicere." — EDDIUS, c. 28, 30. It will be seen that this decree of the council does not repeat, with regard to kings and other powerful lay personages, the threat of deposition, together with excommunication, contained in the celebrated diploma of St. Gregory the Great cited above, vol. i. p. 382.

[185] "Armis non utantur, nec citharedas habeant, vel quæcumque symphonia, nec quoscumque jocos vel ludos ante se permittent. . . . Ut ipse . . . cum universis præsulibus, regibus, principibus, universis fidelibus, senioribus, majoribusque natu totius Saxoniæ, publicam œcumenicamque faciant synodum. . . . Ut quidquid sanctus Theodorus cum sapientibus et fidelibus et viris religiosis in Anglorum provinciis, totis ecclesiis et universo populo Dei ibidem positis profuturam melius ac religiosius invenire potuissent . . . laborare atque transcribere." — *Concilia*, ed. COLETTI, t. vii. p. 603. The

Wilfrid made no haste to quit Rome, after having obtained justice. He remained there several months, and occupied himself among other matters in obtaining pontifical charters for two English monasteries which, though situated beyond the limits of his diocese, lay very near his heart — those of Peterborough and Ely. He had just succeeded in respect to Ely, and expected to carry back a deed of privilege such as the Abbess Etheldreda had requested of him, when he received news of the death of this sainted queen, whose friend and spiritual father he had been, and whose supernatural resolution had been the first cause of his pilgrimage as an exile and accused man to Rome. Probably of all the Christian souls of his own country, hers was the one most tenderly and closely united to his. All that he had suffered through her, and in her cause, must have rendered her peculiarly dear to his generous heart. Etheldreda died young, a victim to one of the contagious diseases which were then so frequent. She had predicted her own death, as well as the number of those brothers and sisters of her community who would follow her to the grave. Three days before her death she was obliged to submit to a painful operation in the throat; she rejoiced at it. "God," she said, "has sent me this suffering to expiate the frivolity of my youth, the time when I remember to have worn with so much pleasure necklaces of pearls and gold on this neck now so swollen and burned by illness." At the last moment, surrounded by the brothers and sisters of her numerous community in tears, she spoke to them at length, imploring them never to let their hearts rest on the earth, but to taste beforehand, by their earnest desires, that joy in the love of Christ which it would not be given to them to know perfectly here below.[187] She

Wilfrid receives at Rome intelligence of the death of Etheldreda.

23d June, 679.

Bollandists (vol. vi. Sept., p. 69), contrary to the opinion of P. Pagi and the editors of the Collections of Councils, believe that the council where Pope Agathon gave the decrees relative to Archbishop Theodore was distinct from that which did justice to Wilfrid a year later. While accepting their chronology, we do not think that their arguments ought to prevail against the ancient opinion, founded on the text of the Acts themselves.

[187] "Scio certissime quia merito in collo pondus languoris porto, in quo juvenculam me memini supervacua monilium pondera portare: et credo quod ideo me suprema pietas dolore colli voluit gravari, ut sic absolvar reatu supervacuæ levitatis: dum mihi nunc, pro auro et margaritis, de collo rubor tumoris ardorque promineat." — Bede, iv. 19. "Monens eas ut animum de supernis nunquam deponerent et suavem cibum cælestis jucunditatis in Christi amore suspirando gustarent, quem adhuc in carne agentes perfecte apprehendisse non poterant." — Thom. Eliensis, c. 21.

carefully directed that they should bury her, not in a stone vault like a queen, but in a wooden coffin, and among the simple nuns.[188]

27th March, 680. The death of Etheldreda must have saddened Wilfrid's stay at Rome, where, however, he was still treated with confidence and distinction by the Pope. He was amitted to the council of one hundred and twenty-five bishops assembled under the presidency of Agathon, to name deputies for the sixth general council which was about to be held at Constantinople for the condemnation of the Monothelite heresy, a heresy which recognized but one single will in the Son of God made man. For half a century this heresy had troubled the Church; it had been adopted by various Byzantine emperors, and had thirty years before led the holy Pope, Martin I., to the most painful of martyrdoms. In the synodical letter which these hundred and twenty bishops, chiefly Italians, wrote to the emperors, in the name of all the provinces of the West, is found this passage: "You have ordered us to send you wise and virtuous ambassadors. There is no secular eloquence among us. Our lands are desolated by the fury of contending races; there is nothing but battles, inroads, and pillage. In the midst of these barbarians, our life is full of anguish; we live by the labor of our hands, for the ancient patrimony of the Church has been, little by little, devoured by various calamities. Our faith is the only patrimony which remains to us; to live for it is our glory; to die for it our eternal advantage." After having described the catholic and apostolic faith, held by all under the terms defined by the Holy See, they add: "We are late in replying to your appeal, because many of us live far away, and even

He assists at the council against the Monothelites.

[188] In spite of these directions, sixteen years after her death, in 695, her sister, who had succeeded her as Abbess of Ely, wished to place her in a mausoleum of white marble, richly carved, which she took from the ruins of the Roman city of Grandchester, near Cambridge. On this occasion it was seen that her body had preserved all its freshness; she seemed to sleep; the surgeon who had opened the tumor in her neck, and who was present at this exhumation, recognized the wound he had made: "Pro aperto et hiante vulnere cum quo sepulta erat, tenuissima cicatricis vestigia parerent." This miraculous preservation appeared to all a decisive proof of the incorruptible virginity which she had guarded throughout her life, even to Bede, who celebrated the translation of the saint's body in an elegy which he has inserted in his History, and in which classic recollections are mingled with those of the martyrology to honor the Anglo-Saxon queen: —

"Bello Mars resonet, nos pacis dona canamus;
Carmina casta mihi, fœdæ non raptus Helenæ;
Dona superna loquar, miseræ non prælia Trojæ."

on the coasts of the great Ocean. We had hoped that our colleague and co-servitor Theodore, archbishop and philosopher of the great island of Britain, would come with the bishops of his country, as well as of yours and of other places, so that we might write to you in the name of our whole council, and that all may be informed of what takes place, for many of our brethren are in the midst of barbarous nations, Lombards, Sclavonians, Goths, and Britons, all very curious touching the faith, and who being all agreed with us as to the faith, would become our enemies if we gave them any subject of scandal." [189]

This letter, signed by the Pope and the hundred and twenty-five bishops, was signed also by Wilfrid as representative at the council of the British bishops,[190] although those bishops had given him no commission on the subject; but he felt himself authorized to bear this witness to the faith of the British Church. His confidence was the better justified, since in the same year Archbishop Theodore held a national council at Hatfield, where all the bishops of England made their solemn profession of faith, and declared that they received the four general councils and the council of Pope Martin against the Monothelites.[191] It seems even that Wilfrid undertook to guarantee not only the faith of the Anglo-Saxon bishops, but also of all the Churches scattered in the north of Great Britain and in Ireland, among the Scots and Picts. Thus the Celtic Christians, whom he had so persecuted and opposed as to peculiar rites, inspired him with no doubt as to their unity of belief on all points which related to the faith; and he did not hesitate to answer for them before the Pope and the universal church.[192]

17th Sept., 650.

He declares strongly in favor of all the Churches of the British Isles.

[189] "Sola est nostra substantia fides nostra: cum qua nobis vivere summa gloria est; pro qua mori lucrum æternum est. . . . Sperabamus de Britannia Theodorum confamulum et coepiscopum nostrum, magnæ insulæ Britanniæ archiepiscopum et philosophum . . . exinde ad nostram humilitatem conjungere." — *Concilia*, ed. Coletti, t. vii. p. 707, 714.

[190] "Ego Wilfridus, humilis episcopus sanctæ Ecclesiæ Eboracenæ insulæ Britanniæ, legatus venerabilis synodi per Britanniam constitutæ, in hanc suggestionem quam pro apostolica nostra fide unanimiter construximus, similiter subscripsi." — Cf. Guill Malmesb., f. 150. Fleury, *Hist. Ecclesiast.*, l. xl. c. 6, 7.

[191] Bede, iv. 17.

[192] This is the result of another signature of his, different from that which we have quoted, though given in the same council, appealed to by him, and admitted by Pope John VI. twenty-five years later. It is thus expressed: "Ego Wilfridus . . . cum aliis cxxv. episcopis in synodo in judicii sede constitutus, et pro omni aquilonali parte, Britanniæ et Hiberniæ insulis quæ

Wilfrid returns to England.

When Wilfrid at last made up his mind to return to England, new dangers met him on the way. He expected to meet again his friend and host, King Dagobert, in Austrasia, but that prince had just fallen a victim to a plot fomented by Ebroïn, one of whose creatures, an unhappy bishop,[193] lay in wait for the great Anglo-Saxon with a band of armed men, with the intention of robbing him, killing or selling into slavery all his companions, and delivering him to the implacable Ebroïn. This bishop reproached Wilfrid with having sent back from exile the tyrant Dagobert, from whom they had just freed themselves. "I only did," said Wilfrid, "what you yourselves would have done if an exile of our race and of royal blood had come to you to seek an asylum." "You are more just than I am," replied the bishop; "pass on your way, and may God and St. Peter be your aid!"[194]

He brings to Peterborough the charter of Pope Agathon.

When Wilfrid arrived in England, his first step before proceeding to his diocese in Mercia was to give to King Ethelred the charter he had obtained from the Pope, with the sanction of the hundred and twenty-five bishops of the council at Rome, in favor of the great abbey of that kingdom and of central England at Peterborough, the foundation of which he had approved fifteen years before, and to which he now put the final crown. The deed of Pope Agathon, addressed to the King of Mercia, to Archbishop Theodore, and to Bishop Sexwulf, who had been the first abbot of the *Burg* of St. Peter, conferred on the monastery an exemption from all ordinary charges and jurisdiction. In this document the king was recommended to be the defender of the community, but never its tyrant; the diocesan bishop to regard the abbot as his assistant in the evangelical ministry; the metropolitan to ordain in his own person the abbot elected by the community. This charter was sanctioned and signed by the King, the Queen, Archbishop Theodore, and his friend Abbot Adrian; and finally by Wilfrid himself, with this formula, "I, Wilfrid, on my way to reclaim, by apostolical favor, my

ab Anglorum et Britonum, nec non Scotorum et Pictorum gentibus incolantur, veram et catholicam fidem confessus est, et cum subscriptione sua confirmavit." — Bede, v. 19. Eddius, c. 50.

[193] Mabillon thinks this was Waimer, Duke of Champagne, made Bishop of Troyes by Ebroïn, to reward his services against St. Leger.

[194] "O rectissime episcope, quid aliud habuisti facere, si exsul de genere nostro. . . . Video te justiorem me esse." — Eddius, c. 31.

see of York, being witness and bearer of this decree, I agree to it." [195]

But the confidence which Wilfrid thus expressed was singularly misplaced. We now reach the most strange incident of all his stormy life. Having returned to Northumbria, conformably to the instructions of the Pope and the bishop, he humbly presented to King Egfrid, who had expelled him, that which he regarded as the standard of victory, namely, the decree of the Holy See and council of Rome, with the seals and signatures of all the bishops. The king convoked the assembly of nobles and clergy, and caused the pontifical letters to be read in their presence. Upon this there arose an ardent opposition. The authority of the Pope or the council was not disputed, but there were cries on all sides that the judgment had been bought. By the advice of the whole council, and with the express consent of the intruded bishops, the king condemned Wilfrid to an ignominious imprisonment of nine months. He was at once taken prisoner; nothing was left to him but the clothing he wore; his servants and adherents were dispersed, and his friends strictly forbidden to visit him. Queen Ermenburga, his old and pitiless enemy, took from his *Chrismarium* or reliquary which he wore round his neck, and took possession of it, having it always hung in her chamber or in her carriage when she travelled, either as a trophy of her victory or from that sincere but savage devotion which at times took such strange forms, and was the cause of such dishonest actions. This done, the noble Bishop was confided to one of the king's officers, Count Osfrid, who removed him so that none of his friends might know where he was, and shut him up in a cell which during the day was scarcely penetrated by a few feeble rays of light, and where at night he was not permitted to have a lamp.[196]

Wilfrid is repelled by the king and the assembly of the Northumbrians.

He is imprisoned.

[195] "Ego Wilfridus, apostolico favore repetens sedem Eboracensem, testis et relator hujus sanctionis votivæ assentior." I follow the text given by Dugdale (i. 67), which P. Pagi considers free from the interpolations and anachronisms of that found in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (anno 680); the Bollandists, however, regard it as tainted with error.

[196] "Vexillum victoriæ ferens, hoc est, apostolicæ sedis judicium . . . cum bullis et sigillis signatis. . . . Omnibus principibus ibidem habitantibus, nec non servis Dei in locum synodalem accersitis. . . . Jussione regis et ejus consiliatorum, cum consensu episcoporum qui ejus episcopatum tenebant . . . novem menses *sine ullo honore* custodire censuerunt . . . in suo solo vestimento. . . . Regina chrismarium hominis Dei reliquiis plenum (quod me enarrantem horruit) de se abstractum, in thalamo suo manens

Connivance of the archbishop Theodore.

It is comprehensible that a barbarous Saxon king, full of pride and cupidity, and a passionate and angry woman, should give themselves up to such excesses against a bishop whose wealth, power, moral influence, and fearless character, excited their jealousy. But what was St. Theodore doing meanwhile? He, so eager, three years before, to make himself the instrument of the King of Northumbria's violent deeds, where was he now when the repairing of his error was in question? He, the metropolitan and chief of the Anglo-Saxon bishops, how could he suffer the episcopal dignity to be outraged in the person of the most illustrious of his brethren? He, the veteran monk, so zealous for the traditions and privileges of his order, how could he yield to the violence of laymen or to the jealousy of the Celts the most ardent propagator of the Benedictine rule? He, the envoy and direct representative of the Holy See in England, how dared he contemn that pontifical decision which Wilfrid had been charged to signify to him? Above all, how dared he brave the anathemas which the decree of the council directed against all traitors, whatever their rank?[197] On these questions, history, so abundant in other details, keeps entire silence; she leaves us no other resource than to look for future repentance and expiation for so shameful a connivance at sin.[198]

Wilfrid refuses to come to terms with the king.

After a while King Egfrid resolved to treat with his captive. He offered to restore to him a part of his bishopric, with many gifts added to it, if Wilfrid would acquiesce in his will, and acknowledge the falsity of the apostolic decree. Wilfrid replied that it would be easier to take his head than to tear such a confession from him. When he was cast back into his cell, he there gave an example of patience and courage truly episcopal. The guards heard him chanting the psalms as if he were in his monastic stall at Ripon or Hexham; at night they saw his prison illumined by a light which terrified them. The wife of Earl Osfrid having fallen dangerously ill, her husband had recourse to the holy man whom he had been appointed to guard; he took him out of prison and led him to the bedside of the invalid. The latter, at an after period and when she

aut curru pergens juxta se pependit. . . . Comes . . . in latebrosis locis ubi raro sol per diem influxit, et lampas per horrorem noctis non accenditur."

[197] "Si quidem episcopus est, qui hanc piam dispositionem temerare tentaverit, sit ab episcopali ordine destitutus, et æterni anathematis reus."

[198] Bolland., l. c., p. 62.

had herself become an abbess, often related to her new family, with tears of gratitude, that the prisoner found her in the last stupor of departing life, yet that a few drops of holy water cast on her face, with prayer, were sufficient to cure her. Osfrid, penetrated with gratitude and admiration, quickly informed the king of what had happened. "I conjure you," said the brave Saxon, "both for your own welfare and for mine, no longer to persecute this holy and innocent bishop; as for me, I would rather die than continue this jailer's trade." [199] Far from listening to him, the king took from him the guardianship of the captive, who was sent to a castle still more remote, near Dunbar, on the shore of the Scottish sea, where he was intrusted to another earl much more harsh than Osfrid, with orders to keep him strictly isolated in his prison, and to put him in irons. But they were never able, Eddi tells us, to make these of the right size; they were always either too large or too small to confine the hands and feet of the prisoner.

He is transferred to Dunbar.

While Wilfrid thus paid the price of his glory and his courage, the king and queen made a triumphant progress through the very country where he was held prisoner. In the course of this tour, they arrived at the Monastery of Coldingham, on the seashore, not far from Dunbar, and half way between the prison and the holy island of Lindisfarne. In this great establishment, where Etheldreda had first taken refuge, two communities, one of men and one of women, obeyed the Abbess Ebba, sister of Oswy, and aunt of Egfrid. Like Hilda at Whitby, Ebba exercised at Coldingham, with great wisdom and authority, that sort of rule at once spiritual and temporal which was the inheritance of more than one Anglo-Saxon princess; but far from being, like Hilda, the enemy of Wilfrid, she became his liberator. During the night which the royal couple passed at the monastery, Queen Ermenburga was seized with an attack of delirium; in the morning the abbess appeared, and as the queen, whose limbs were already contracted, seemed at the point of death, Ebba, with the double authority of a cloistered superior and of a princess of the race of Odin, said to her nephew, "I know all that you have done; you have superseded Bishop Wilfrid without having a crime to

Delivered by the intervention of the prin-

[199] "Adhuc vivens illa, nunc sanctimonialis materfamilias, nomine Æbba, cum lacrymis hoc narrare consuevit. . . . Adjuro te per vitam meam et salutem tuam . . . quia magis eligo mori, quam eum innoxium flagellare." — Eddius, c. 35, 36.

cess Ebba, Abbess of Coldingham.

accuse him of; and when he returned from his exile with an apostolic verdict in his favor, you robbed and imprisoned him, foolishly despising the power of St. Peter to bind and to loose. My son, listen to the words of her who speaks to you as a mother. Break the bishop's chains; restore to him the relics which the queen has taken from his neck, and which she carries about with her to her own injury, as the Philistines did the ark of God; and if (as would be best) you will not restore him to his bishopric, at least let him be free to leave your kingdom and go where he will. Then, upon my faith, the queen will recover; if not, I take God to witness, that He will punish you both." [200]

Egfrid understood and obeyed: he sent the reliquary to Dunbar, with orders to set the bishop at liberty immediately. Ermenburga recovered, and Wilfrid, having speedily collected some of his numerous friends and disciples, took refuge in Mercia, the king of which country he supposed would be friendly towards him, in consequence of his having brought him from Rome the deed of privilege for Peterborough. But here also his expectations were vain. He had just founded a small monastery for the use of his troop of exiles, when the hatred of his enemies discovered and pursued him. Ethelred, King of Mercia, had married a sister of Egfrid; and the queens, as we see in Saxon history, were often more powerful than the kings, for evil as well as for good. Ethelred, moved by the instigation of his wife, or by fear of displeasing his powerful brother-in-law, signified to his nephew, who had given one of his estates to the persecuted bishop, that he would endanger his head if he kept the enemy of King Egfrid another day in his territory. Wilfrid, therefore, was obliged to leave Mercia, and went into the neighboring kingdom of Wessex. But here the hatred of another queen assailed him. The wife of Centwin, King of the Western Saxons, was the sister of that Ermenburga who had been the first cause of the poor exile's troubles; she had espoused her sister's quarrel; and again he was obliged to fly from a country in which there was no hospitality for him.

He is, however, compelled to leave Mercia,

And Wessex.

[200] "Sapientissima materfamilias veniens ad reginam contractis membris stricte alligatam et sine dubio morientem videns. . . . Ego scio et vere scio. . . . Et nunc, fili mi, secundum consilium matris tuæ fac, disrumpe vincula ejus et sanctas reliquias quas regina de collo spoliati abstraxit, et in perniciem sui (sicut arcam Dei . . .), dimitte." — EDDIUS, c. 37.

These three brothers-in-law, kept by a common animosity in unwonted union, reigned over the three kingdoms which together occupied three-quarters at least of Saxon England.[201]

Wherever the influence of the Northumbrian king could extend, there was no longer for Wilfrid either security or peace.

He takes refuge with the Saxons of the South, and converts them to Christianity. 681-683.

Thus pursued by the influence of Ermenburga, her husband, and brothers-in-law, from almost the whole territory of the Saxon Confederation; repelled from Canterbury and its environs by the hostility or indifference of Archbishop Theodore, he took refuge in the smallest and most obscure of the seven kingdoms, and the only one which had not yet been christianized, the kingdom of the Southern Saxons. The asylum which Christian kings refused him he hoped to find among his pagan countrymen. It may perhaps be recollected that he had been in great danger fifteen years before, at the commencement of his episcopate, on his return from his consecration at Compiègne, when wrecked on this inhospitable coast.[202] The King of Sussex himself, who was still a pagan like his subjects, had been then the leader of the wreckers. Now the king was a Christian, thanks to his wife, a Mercian princess; but the country continued almost completely inaccessible to Catholic missionaries. This kingdom had furnished to the Heptarchy its first known Bretwalda, Ælla, but since that time had fallen into obscurity, being defended at once against the invasions of its powerful neighbors, and against the efforts of the Canterbury monks, by its rocks and forests, which rendered it difficult of approach,[203] a circumstance which is hardly comprehensible now in sight of that soft and fertile country. The inhabitants held sternly to their ancient faith; they reproached the other Saxons, who were already Christians, with their apostasy. At the same time, they had among them the begin-

[201] "In eo territorio pro Deo donato monasteriolum fundavit, quod adhuc usque hodie monachi ejus possident. . . . Audientes hominem Dei . . . illic manentem et modicum quiescentem, Beorthvaldo in sua salute interdicunt, ut sibi eo minus diei spatium esset pro adulatione Egfridi regis. . . . Nam illic regina . . . odio odebat eum, uti propter amicitiam regum trium dehinc fugatus abscessit. . . . Ita ut de propria provincia expulsus, nec in aliena regione, ultra vel citra mare, ubi potestas Egfridi prævaluit, requiem haberet." — Eddius, c. 38, 39.

[202] See above, p. 336.

[203] "Præ rupium multitudine et silvarum densitate . . . inexpugnabilis." — Eddius, c. 39.

nings from which, in ordinary cases, the conversion even of the most obstinate was produced — namely, a Christian princess and a monastery. This monastery, however, was occupied only by a small community of Celtic monks, of whom mention has already been made,[204] and the people of Sussex gave no heed to their teaching. It was to this new soil that Wilfrid came: he might be driven from his country and from his diocese, but nothing could prevent his being, wherever he was, the minister of the living God, and the preacher of the truth. His first exile had made him the Apostle of the Frisians; his second gave him occasion to open the doors of the Church to the last pagans who remained to be converted in the British Isles. Like Æneas at Carthage, he touched and gained the heart of the king and queen by his story of the cruel trials of his exile. He enlightened and roused their minds; he preached to them with infinite sweetness the greatness and goodness of God; and he obtained permission to address the mass of their people to whom no one had yet dared to carry the word of life.

Thus daily, for many successive months, the prescribed and fugitive bishop stood forth among those unconquered Saxons, and told them all the series of miracles worked by the Divine Power since the creation of the world; he taught them to condemn idols, to believe in a future judgment, to fear eternal punishment, and to desire eternal happiness. His persuasive eloquence triumphed over all obstacles. The chiefs of the nation, the earls and thanes, demanded baptism at his hands; four priests of his followers baptized the rest of the nation; a few, however, resisted; and the king thought himself authorized to compel them to follow the example of their countrymen.[205] This melancholy fact must be confessed with regret, and forgiven, in consideration of the age and race, to which violence was so natural and so contagious; but it must be added that this is the sole instance in which force was employed in the whole history of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, a work which Wilfrid

[204] Page 301.

[205] "Et si propter inimicitias regis in patria sive parochia sua recipi non potuit; non tamen ab evangelizandi potuit ministerio cohiberi . . . concedendo, imo multum gaudente rege primos provinciæ duces ac milites sacro-sancto fonte abluebat." — Bede, iv. 13. "Totius exsilii sui austeritatem per ordinem narravit . . . leniter suadens. . . . Stans episcopus noster in medio gentilium . . . per plures menses longo ambitu verborum . . . suaviloqua eloquentia omnia mirabiliter per ordinem prædicavit . . . paganorum utriusque sexus, quidam voluntarie, allii vero coacti regis imperio . . . in una die multa millia baptizata sunt." — Eddius, c. 39.

had the glory of completing by the noble labors of his exile.[206]

The God whom he preached to these last pagans permitted his mission to be the channel of other blessings besides the gift of salvation. Before Wilfrid's arrival, a drought of three years' duration had desolated the country, and famine decimated the population. The poor famished creatures might be seen dragging themselves, by forty or fifty at a time, to the edge of the precipitous cliffs on the shore, and thence, holding each other by their emaciated hands, they would plunge together into the sea.[207] But on the very day when Wilfrid administered baptism to the chiefs, a soft and abundant rain watered the desolate fields, and restored to all the hope of a plentiful harvest.[208] While the cruel famine lasted the bishop had taught his future converts a new means of gaining their subsistence by fishing with nets. Until his arrival, although the waters of the sea and of their rivers abounded with fish, they had been able to catch nothing but eels.[209] Wilfrid did not disdain to teach them how to join all their little nets into one large enough to catch the biggest fish. By such services he gradually gained the hearts of those whose souls he wished to save. The King of Sussex was as grateful as his people. He proved it by giving to the apostle of his country, for a residence during his exile, the domain on which he himself lived, and which supported eighty-seven families — that is to say, was, according to Saxon calculations, capable of feeding that number of mouths, and consequently quite sufficient for the train of monks and other Northumbrians who followed the exile in his wanderings. This estate formed a peninsula, which was called Seal's Island. Here Wilfrid founded a monastery, which afterwards became the seat of the most southern diocese of

He teaches them the art of fishing with nets.

Foundation of Selsey.

[206] Bede says nothing of this use of force which contrasted too strongly with the conduct he had so much praised in the first Christian King of Kent (i. 26); but, unhappily, we must believe the testimony of Eddi, who, if not actually with Wilfrid on his mission to Sussex, as at other places, must yet have known better than any one else exactly what passed there.

[207] "Sæpe quadraginta simul aut quinquaginta . . . procederent ad præcipitium . . . et junctis misere manibus, pariter omnes aut ruina perituri aut fluctibus absorbendi decederent."

[208] "Ipso die . . . pluvia serena sed copiosa descendit, refloruit terra, rediitque viridantibus arvis annus lætus et frugifer." — Bede, iv. 13.

[209] "Docuit eos piscando victum quærere. Piscandi peritia genti nulla nisi ad anguillas tantum inerat. . . . Collectis undecumque retibus anguillaribus." — Bede, iv. 13.

England,[210] and which he filled, half with monks who had come with him from the north, and half with novices taken from the converts of the south. These monks soon united in celebrating, among the other festivals of the Catholic liturgy, the feast of St. Oswald, the king who died fighting for the Christian faith and the independence of Northumbria, some years after the birth of Wilfrid; and this particular shows us how the unity of faith and associations consecrated by the new religion prepared the way for the social and political union of the different races of Great Britain.[211]

Wilfrid found on his new possessions two hundred and fifty slaves of both sexes, whom he not only delivered from the yoke of Satan by baptizing them, but also from that of men by setting them free.[212] It was thus that the monastic apostles sowed from a full hand, in England as elsewhere, bread for the soul and for the body, salvation and freedom.

681-686. Five years thus passed over Wilfrid, in his laborious but fruitful exile, of which the conversion of the Southern Saxons was not the only consolation. While the proscribed bishop reconstituted a centre of monastic life and Christian evangelism in his peninsula of Selsey, the forests of Sussex gave asylum to a whole band of other exiles, of whom the chief was a young prince of the Western Saxons named Ceadwalla, who had been banished from Wessex by the same king who, acting on the suggestion of his wife, expelled Wilfrid. The similarity of their fortunes united the two fugitives, though the western prince was still a pagan. Wilfrid, who seems never to have feared a danger, or refused to do a service, procured horses and money for Ceadwalla. The exiled prince, whose impetuosity and boldness were only surpassed by his cruelty, seized, one after the other, the two kingdoms of Wessex and Sussex, laid waste the kingdom of Kent, and ended by conquering the Isle of Wight. This picturesque island, so much admired by modern travellers, and which lies between the two districts

Relations of Wilfrid with Ceadwalla, an exile like himself,

And who becomes King of Wessex.

[210] "Donavit terram octoginta septem familiarum ubi suos homines qui exules vagabantur. . . . Vocabulo *Sele-seu*," afterwards called Selsey, created a bishopric in 711, and transferred to Chichester in 1070.

[211] "Ex hoc tempore non solum in eodem monasterio, sed in plerisque locis aliis, cœpit annuatim ejusdem regis ac militis Christi natalitias dies missarum celebratione venerari." — BEDE, iv. 14.

[212] "Servos et ancillas . . . quos omnes, non solum baptizando a servitute dæmoniaca salvavit, sed etiam libertatem donando humanæ jugo servitutis absolvit." — BEDE, l. c.

occupied by the Saxons of the West and South, was inhabited by twelve hundred pagan families of the tribe of the Jutes, a race which first of all the German invaders had landed upon the coast of Kent. The ferocious Ceadwalla slaughtered them all, to avenge the wounds he had received in attacking them. But his mind was pervaded by a vague instinct of religion such as he had seen in Wilfrid, although he had not been moved to adopt it. Before he invaded the island he made a vow that, if victorious, he would give a quarter of his booty to the God of Wilfrid, and he kept his word by granting to the bishop a quarter of the conquered and depopulated island. He even carried his cruel condescension so far as to permit the monks to instruct and baptize two young brothers of the chief of the island before cutting them down in the general massacre. And the two young victims marched to death with so joyous a confidence, that the popular veneration long counted them among the martyrs of the new faith. This savage, as soon as he returned to Wessex, summoned Wilfrid thither, treated him as his father and friend, and put himself definitely under instruction. But as soon as he understood, thanks to the teaching of Wilfrid, what religion and the Church meant, he found baptism by Bishop Wilfrid insufficient, and it will be hereafter seen that he went to Rome, as much to expiate his crimes by a laborious pilgrimage, as to receive baptism at the hands of the Pope.

He gives Wilfrid a fourth part of the Isle of Wight.

21st Aug., 686.

Although the report of Wilfrid's fresh apostolic conquests, and of his relations with the kings of the provinces nearest the metropolis of Canterbury, must certainly have reached the ears of Archbishop Theodore, the conduct of that prelate towards him continued inexplicable. In spite of the decrees of the Holy See, he held at Twyford, in Northumbria, a council, where, with the consent of King Egfrid, he disposed of the episcopal sees of Hexham and Lindisfarne, exactly as if these dioceses had not been parts of that of York, or as if Wilfrid had been dead or canonically deposed.[213] The first bishop thus placed by Theodore at Hexham, a see created in the very monastery built and endowed by Wilfrid, was an admirable monk, named Cuthbert, whose virtues and sanctity had long been celebrated in Northumbria; and, what is stranger still, nothing

Theodore disposes anew of the diocese of Wilfrid. 684.

[213] Bede, iv. 28; Bolland, t. vi. Sept., p. 64.

in the fully detailed life of this saint which has been preserved to us, shows that his repugnance to be made bishop had any connection with the manifest violation of the rights of him whose place he was called upon to usurp. All that he desired was to be transferred from Hexham to Lindisfarne — that is to say, to the episcopal monastery where he had been educated, and in which, or in one of its dependencies, he had always lived. He evidently believed that the metropolitan supremacy of Theodore was without limit, and dispensed him from following the canons of the Church.

King Egfrid

King Egfrid professed the most affectionate devotion to Cuthbert; but this need not astonish us. The persecutor of Wilfrid was far from being the enemy of the Church or of the monastic order. He was, on the contrary, the founder and benefactor of many of the great monasteries of the north of England, and the friend of all the saints of his time, except Wilfrid alone; and it seems to have been his wish to transfer to Cuthbert the confiding affection and respectful deference with which he had treated Wilfrid in the early part of his reign. Ermenburga, the cruel enemy of Wilfrid, was, like her husband, filled with the most ardent veneration for the holy monk, who had become one of the successors of her victim. But this devotion did not prevent Egfrid from giving himself up to ambition, and indulging in a thirst for war and conquest too much conformed to the traditions of his ancestors and pagan predecessors, "the Ravager," and "the Man of Fire."[214] In 684, without any known motive, he sent an army against Ireland, which devasted that island with pitiless cruelty. This invasion is the first of the unexpiated national crimes of the Anglo-Saxons against Ireland. It excited the indignation, not only of the victims, but also of the witnesses of its barbarity. The venerable Bede himself, though little to be suspected of partiality, or even of justice, as regards the Celts, points out the crime committed by the king of his nation against an innocent people, who, far from espousing the cause of the British Celts, had always been the friends and allies of the Anglo-Saxons. The soldiers of Egfrid did not even spare those great and holy monasteries where the Anglo-Saxon youth were in the habit of going to learn evangelical piety and knowledge, or where, as at Mayo, there lived a numerous community of Northumbrian monks who

Cruelly ravages Ireland, 684,

[214] See p. 203.

had preferred to forsake their country, and remain faithful to the teachings of their first apostles, rather than to submit to the triumph of Wilfrid and the Roman rule. The poor Irish, after defending themselves to the utmost, were everywhere vanquished, and had no other resource left but that of seeking by constant and solemn imprecations to call down the vengeance of heaven upon their unworthy assailants.[215] This time at least their too legitimate curses were realized.

Despite the entreaties of the Northumbrian monk Egbert.

In vain the Northumbrian Egbert, an illustrious and most learned monk of Lindisfarne, who had voluntarily banished himself to Ireland for the love of Christ and the benefit of his soul,[216] and who had great authority in both islands, supplicated the king of his native country to spare a people who had in no way provoked his anger. In vain the holy bishop Cuthbert, together with the best friends of the king, endeavored in the following year to dissuade him from commencing a war, not less cruel, and perhaps not less unjust, against the Picts. Egfrid would listen neither to one nor the other, but hurried to his ruin. He himself led his troops, and permitted them under his very eyes to devastate the invaded country with atrocious cruelty.[217] The Northern Celts retired before him, and thus succeeded in drawing him into a Highland pass, where he perished with his whole army, while still scarcely forty years of age, and after a reign of fifteen years. It was the counterpoise and return for the victory he had gained at the beginning of his reign in the days of his happy union with Wilfrid. This disaster was the signal for the liberation of the Celtic races whom Oswald, Oswy, and Egfrid had brought under the yoke of Northumbria, a yoke now broken forever. The Picts, the Scots, and the Britons of Strathclyde, together rushed upon the Angles, and drove them from the whole conquered territory between the Firth of Forth and the Tweed. Since then the northern frontier of Northumbria and of all England has remained fixed at the line which runs from the mouth of the Tweed to the Solway Firth. And since then,

Despite those of Bishop Cuthbert, he invades Caledonia, and perishes there.

20th May, 685.

[215] "Gentem innoxiam et nationi Anglorum semper amicissimam. . . . At insulani . . . cælitus vindicari continuis diu imprecationibus postulabant." — Bede, iv. 26.

[216] "Venerabilis et cum omni honorificentia honorandus famulus Christi et sacerdos Egbert quem in Hibernia insula peregrinans ducere vitam pro adipiscenda in cœlo patria retulimus." — Bede, v. 9.

[217] "Dum Egfridus . . . eorum regna atroci sævitia devastabat." — Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 27.

also, the Angles who remained north of the Tweed have been subject to the Scots and Picts, forming with them the kingdom henceforward called Scotland. From that day the splendor of Northumbria was eclipsed.[218]

Queen Ermenburga informed by Cuthbert of the fate of her husband.

Queen Ermenburga awaited the result of her husband's expedition in a monastery governed by one of her sisters at Carlisle, in the centre of the British population of Cumberland;[219] and the holy bishop Cuthbert, to whom King Egbert had given this town with its environs, came to the same place to console her in case of a misfortune which he but too clearly foresaw. On the day after his arrival, as the governor of the town accompanied him towards the ancient ramparts of the Roman city, he made a sudden pause, and, leaning on his staff, said with a sigh, "Alas! I fear that all is over, and that the judgment of God has come upon our army." When he was urged to explain what he meant, he merely replied, "See how clear the sky is, and remember that the judgments of God are inscrutable."[220] Upon this he immediately returned to the queen, and told her that he feared the king had perished, and that she ought to start not the next day, which was Sunday, a day on which it was unlawful to travel in a carriage,[221] but on the Monday, to seek refuge in the royal fortress of Bamborough, where he promised to join her.

Two days afterwards a fugitive from the battle came to tell that at the very hour indicated by the saint, King Egfrid, whose guards had all perished in his defence, had been killed by the avenging sword of a Pict.

Takes the veil.

Ermenburga bowed to the Divine hand which struck her. She took the veil from the hands of

[218] "Ex quo tempore spes cœpit et virtus regni Anglorum fluere ac retro sublapsa referri." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 26.

[219] Carlisle was, as we have said, emphatically British. Even to the present day Cumberland has retained its British population. It bore the title of Kingdom in the middle ages, after it had escaped from the Northumbrian yoke. — Varin, memoir already quoted, p. 368; see also Spruner's Historic Atlas.

[220] "Stans juxta baculum sustentationis . . . suspirans, ait: O, ô, ô! existimo enim perpetratum esse bellum, judicatumque est judicium de populis nostris bellantibus adversum. . . . O filioli mei, considerate quam admirabilis sit aer, et recogitate quam inscrutabilia sint judicia Dei." — *Tertia Vita auctore Monacho coævo*, ap. Bolland., t. iii. Martii. p. 123. The version of Bede, in the *Life of S. Cuthbert*, ch. 27, says, on the contrary, "Nonne videtis quam mire mutatus et turbatus sit aer!"

[221] "Quia die dominico curru ire non licet." Even now, among the descendants of the Anglo-Saxons inhabiting Scotland, popular piety renders it difficult to travel on Sunday.

Cuthbert in her sister's monastery at Carlisle. This Jezebel, as she is called by the friend of Wilfrid, changed suddenly from a wolf into a lamb,[222] and became the model of abbesses. The body of her husband was not buried at Whitby, as those of his father and grandfather had been,[223] but carried, perhaps as a trophy of the victory, to the monastic island of Iona, which had been the asylum of his race in their exile, and which was still the national sanctuary of the victors.

Consequences of Ecfrid's defeat.

Wilfrid, banished and deprived of his diocese, was thus but too well avenged. The Northumbrian kingdom, which had struck in his person at the independence and growing authority of the Church, paid the price of its fault by losing half its dominions, and by witnessing the downfall of that political and religious edifice which had been built upon the ruin of the Bishop of York.

The Saxon Bishop of the Picts flees to Whitby.

One of the new bishops substituted for Wilfrid, a Saxon monk, named Trumwine, whose see had been placed at Abercorn, on the banks of the Forth, at the extreme limit of the Northumbrian territory, escaped with difficulty from death or slavery, the only alternative which the Celtic conquerors left to their defeated enemies. With him came all his monks, whom he dispersed, as he best could, among the Northumbrian communities, as it was necessary to do afterwards with the Saxon nuns of his diocese, who fled before the irritated Celts, whom they regarded as savages. He himself sought a refuge at Whitby, where he passed the rest of his days, rendering such services as were compatible with his episcopal character to the abbess, who was invested with the difficult mission of ruling a double community of monks and nuns.[224] It was no longer Hilda the holy foundress who governed this great establishment; it was a daughter of Oswy, a sister of the three last

[222] "De lupa, post occisionem regis, agna Domini et perfecta abbatissa materque familias optima commutata est." — Eddius, c. 23. Cf. Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 27. 28.

[223] See above, page 357.

[224] "Inter plurimos gentis Anglorum vel interemptos gladio, vel servitio addictos, vel de terra Pictorum fuga lapsos . . . recessit cum suis, eosque ubicumque poterat amicis per monasteria commendans . . . in monastica districtione non sibi solummodo, sed et multis utilem ducit . . . ipse in supradicto famulorum famularumque Dei monasterio. Adveniente illuc episcopo, maximum regendi auxilium simul et suæ vitæ solatium devota Deo doctrix invenit." — Bede, iv. 26. He died there in 700. We find that St. Cuthbert assigned a residence in a town of his diocese to the Northern nuns, "timore barbarici exercitus a monasterio suo profugis." — *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 30.

Northumbrian kings, that Elfleda, whom her father had devoted to God as the price of his victory over the Mercians, and who, intrusted from infancy to Hilda, had grown up in the shadow of the great sea-side monastery. Her mother, Queen Eanfleda, the widow of Oswy, and first protectress of Wilfrid, had joined her there, to end her days in peace beside the tomb of her husband, and under the crosier of her daughter.

Archbishop Theodore acknowledges his wrongs toward Wilfrid.

The adversaries of Wilfrid thus vanished one by one. Of the three principal authors of his ruin, Egfrid was now dead, and Ermenburga a veiled nun. There still remained Archbishop Theodore. Whether the death of Egfrid had acted as a warning to him, or whether the recollection of his apostolic mission, which, in respect to Wilfrid, he had so ill fulfilled, came back to his mind, with a remorse made keener by age and illness, at least it became apparent to him that the moment for confessing and expiating his fault had come, and he did so with the complete and generous frankness which belongs to great minds.[225] He was an old man even at the moment when he was taken from his Eastern monastery to be placed at the head of the English Church, and he had now labored nearly twenty years in that fruitful but rude and thorny field. He was thus more than eighty, and the day of his death could not be far distant. The archbishop perceived that if death overtook him before he was reconciled to Wilfrid, the great works he had accomplished in regulating, purifying, and consolidating the morals and Christian institutions of England would be in some degree contradicted before God and men, by the sight of the great bishop, who had been robbed and exiled solely for having defended his rights and obeyed the Holy See. Accordingly, he summoned Wilfrid to him. Sussex, the residence of the exile, was near to Canterbury, or rather to London, where the interview took place, in presence of a holy monk, who was Bishop of London and of the East Saxons.[226] In presence of these two bishops, the countryman and successor of St. Paul[227] made his general confession. When he had ended, he said to Wilfrid, "My greatest remorse

[225] "Auctoritatem apostolicæ sedis, a qua missus fuerat, metu agitante, honorificans." — Eddius, c. 41. "De peccato in Wilfridum commisso sauciatus conscientiam." — Guill. Malmesb., f. 151.

[226] Earconwald, of whom more will be said later. — Bede, iv. 6, 11.

[227] The English have an old tradition, according to which St. Paul, born, like Theodore, at Tarsus in Cilicia, was the first to preach the Christian faith in Britain.

is for the crime I have committed against you, most holy bishop, in consenting to the will of the kings when they robbed you of your possessions and sent you into exile without any fault of yours. I confess it to God and St. Peter, and I take you both to witness that I will do what I can to make up for this sin, and to reconcile you with all the kings and nobles, among my friends, whether they wish it or not. God has revealed to me that I shall die within a year; therefore I conjure you, by the love of God and St. Peter, to consent that I establish you during my life as heir to my archiepiscopal see, for I acknowledge that of all your nation you are the best instructed in all knowledge and in the discipline of Rome." [228] Wilfrid answered, "May God and St. Peter pardon you all our controversy. I shall always pray for you as your friend. Send letters now to your friends that they may be made aware of our reconciliation, and the injustice of that robbery of which I have been the victim, and that they may restore to me at least a part of my goods, according to the command of the Holy See. After which we will examine with you in the great council of the country who is the most worthy to become your successor." [229]

And desires to secure to him the succession to the archbishopric.

The old archbishop immediately set to work to repair as far as possible the injury he had done to Wilfrid. He wrote letters to all quarters, to plead his cause and to secure for him as many friends as he had once sought to make him enemies.[230] Unfortunately only one of these letters had been preserved, but it is sufficient to do honor to his goodness of heart, and to show how the old Greek monk, transplanted into the midst of a Germanic population, could rule and train the souls under his authority, like a worthy successor and countryman of him who acknowledged himself, according to Scripture, "debtor both to the Greeks and Barbarians." It is addressed to Ethelred, King of Mercia, who by his means had become the

He writes in favor of Wilfrid to the King of Mercia

[228] "Sapienter totius vitæ suæ cursum cum confessione coram Domino pure revelavit. . . . Cunctos amicos meos regales et principes eorum ad amicitiam tuam . . . volentes nolentesque constringens adtraho . . . quia veraciter in omni sapientia et in judiciis Romanorum eruditissimum te vestræ gentis agnovi." — Eddius, c. 41.

[229] "Ero pro tua confessione orans pro te amicus in perpetuum. . . . Modo primum mitte nuntios cum litteris . . . ut me olim innoxium exspoliatum agnoscant . . . et postea . . . quis dignus sit . . . cum consensu tuo in majori consilio consulemus." — Eddius, c. 41.

[230] "Sibi ubique amicos, quasi prius inimicos, facere diligenter excogitavit." — *Ibid.*

friend and brother-in-law of Wilfrid's chief persecutor.[231] "My very dear son, — Let your holiness know that I am at peace with the venerable Bishop Wilfrid; therefore I beseech and enjoin you, by the love of Christ, to give him your protection as you formerly did, to the utmost of your power, and as long as you live; for all this time while robbed of his possessions, he has labored for God among the heathen. It is I, Theodore, the humble and infirm bishop, who in my old age address to you this exhortation, according to the apostolic will, so that this holy man may forget the injuries of which he has been so unjustly the victim, and that amends may be made to him. I would ask you besides, if you still love me, although the length of the journey may make my request importunate, let me see once more your dear countenance, that I may bless you before I die. But above all, my son, my dear son, do what I conjure you to do for the holy Wilfrid. If you obey your father who will not be much longer in this world, obedience will bring you happiness. Adieu, peace be with you, live in Christ, abide in the Lord, and may the Lord abide in you."[232] This letter had its due effect. Ethelred received Wilfrid with great honor, although six years before he would not suffer him to spend a single night in his kingdom; he restored all the monasteries and domains which had formerly been his in Mercia, and to the end of his life remained faithfully attached to him.

To the Abbess Elfleda.

But it was in Northumbria above all that it was important to obtain restitution for the robbed and humiliated bishop. For this purpose Theodore addressed himself to the new king Aldfrid and to the princess Elfleda, sister of the king, and Abbess of Whitby, who had naturally inherited a dislike for Wilfrid from St. Hilda, from whom she had received her education, before becoming her successor, and whose vast building she was about to complete.[233]

[231] See BEDE, iv. 21.

[232] "Cognoscat tua miranda sanctitas, pacem me in Christo habere cum venerando episcopo Wilfrido. . . . Ego Theodorus, humilis episcopus, decrepita ætate, hoc tuæ beatitudini suggero . . . et licet tibi pro longinquitate itineris durum esse videatur, oculi mei faciem tuam jucundam videant. . . . Age ergo, fili mi, fili mi, taliter de illo supra fato viro sanctissimo, sicut te deprecatus sum. . . . Vale in pace, vive in Christo, dege in Domino, Dominus sit tecum."

[233] "Præcipuum monasterium . . . quod ab insignis religionis femina Hilda cœptum, Edelfleda ejusdem regis filia in regimine succedens, magnis fiscalium opum molibus auxit." — GUILL. MALMESB., *De Gest. Reg.*, iii.

Death of Ebba of Coldingham. 25th Aug., 683.

Hilda had been quickly followed to the grave by her illustrious rival Ebba, who was, like herself, a princess of the Northumbrian royal dynasty, and abbess of a double monastery at Coldingham. The young Elfleda, niece of Ebba and heiress of Hilda, was therefore the sole representative in Northumbria of that great and salutary authority which was so willingly yielded by the Anglo-Saxon kings and people to those princesses of their sovereign races who became the brides of Christ.

Connection of the Abbess Elfleda with Bishop Cuthbert. 680.

The noble Elfleda, who was scarcely twenty-five years of age when she was called to succeed Hilda as Abbess of Whitby, is described by Bede as a most pious mistress of spiritual life. But like all the Anglo-Saxon princesses whom we meet with in the cloister at this epoch, she did not cease to take a passionate interest in the affairs of her race and country. All the more strongly, in consequence, she felt the need of spiritual help to aid her virgin motherhood in ruling the many souls gathered together under her crosier.[234] It was chiefly to Cuthbert that she had recourse. Before he had become bishop, while he lived on a desert rock near Lindisfarne, she had prevailed on him to grant her an interview in an island on the Northumbrian coast, called then, as now, Coquet Island, and which lies nearer Lindisfarne than Whitby. This was while her brother Egfrid still reigned. The hermit and the abbess went each to their meeting by sea; and when he had answered all her questions, she threw herself at his feet, and entreated him to tell her, by virtue of those prophetic powers with which he was known to be gifted, whether her brother Egfrid should have a long life and reign. "I am surprised," he answered, "that a woman well taught and versed as you are in the knowledge of Holy Scripture should speak to me of length with regard to human life, which lasts no longer than a spider's web, as the Psalmist has said, '*Quia anni nostri sicut aranea meditabuntur.*' How short then must life be for a man who has but a year to live, and who has death at his door!" At these words, she wept long; then, drying her tears, she continued, with feminine boldness, and inquired who should be the king's successor, since he had neither sons nor brothers. "Do not say," he replied,

[234] "Devota Deo doctrix . . . quæ inter gaudia virginitatis non paucis famularum Christi agminibus maternæ pietatis curam adhibebat . . . venerandissima virgo et mater virginum . . . multo virum Dei semper excolebat amore." — Bede, iv. 26, in *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 24. Cf. 34.

"that he is without heirs; he shall have a successor whom you will love, as you love Egfrid, as a sister." "Then tell me, I entreat you, where this successor is." "You see," returned Cuthbert, directing the eyes of his companion towards the archipelago of islets which dots the Northumbrian coast around Lindisfarne, "how many isles are in the vast ocean; it is easy for God to bring from them some one to reign over the English." Elfleda then perceived that he spoke of a young man supposed to be the son of her father Oswy, by an Irish mother, and who, since his infancy, had lived as an exile at Iona, where he gave himself up to study.[235]

Accession of King Aldfrid in Northumbria. 685-705.

And it thus happened in reality that the cruel and warlike Egfrid was succeeded on the most important throne of the Anglo-Saxon confederation by a learned prince who, during twenty years of a long and prosperous reign, sustained and restored to the utmost extent of his powers the ancient glory of the Northumbrian kingdom, within the new limits to which the victorious insurrection of the Picts had restricted it, but who specially distinguished himself by his love of letters and knowledge. Aldfrid[236] had passed his early days at Iona, in that island retreat where his father Oswy and his uncle Oswald had both found refuge in their youth, and whither the bleeding body of the brother whose crown descended to him had just been carried. During his long, and perhaps voluntary, exile in the Scottish monasteries and schools, he had been trained in theology and dialectics, cosmography, and all the studies then cultivated by the Celtic monks. He brought back from his residence at Iona, and his visits to Melrose and other places, that passionate curiosity and lavish liberality which may be traced among the Irish of the seventh century, and which seems a kind of prelude to the revival of learning in the fifteenth century.[237]

[235] "Repente in medio sermone advoluta pedibus ejus, adjuravit eum. Hæc audiens fusis lacrymis præsagia dira deflebat: extersaque facie, rursus audacia feminea adjuravit per majestatem summæ divinitatis. . . . Cernis hoc mare magnum et spatiosum, quot abundat insulis! Facile est Deo de aliqua harum sibi provideri, quem regno præficiat Anglorum. Intellexit ergo quia de Aldfrido diceret, qui tunc in insulis Scotorum ob studium litterarum exsulebat." — Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 24.

[236] It has already been said that he must not be confounded with Alchfrid, the eldest legitimate son of Oswy, and Wilfrid's first friend. Aldfrid was a natural son, and probably the eldest of Oswy's children.

[237] "Qui nunc regnat pacifice, qui tunc erat in insula quam Hy nominant." — *Vita brevis S. Cuthberti*, ap. Bolland., t. iii. Mart., p. 141. "Vir in

To this new king, as well as to his sister, the Abbess Elfleda, Archbishop Theodore wrote, to exhort them both to lay aside their enmity against Wilfrid, and to receive him with unreserved kindness.[238] A prince so much given to letters could not remain deaf to the prayers of an archbishop who added to his authority as legate of the Holy See and primate of the Anglo-Saxon Church the fame of greater learning and zeal for intellectual culture than had ever before been seen in Britain. Accordingly, in the second year of his reign, Aldfrid recalled Wilfrid to Northumbria, and restored to him, first, the Monastery of Hexham, with all the surrounding parishes, then the bishopric of York, and finally Ripon, which had been his chosen home, and the centre of his reforms. It is easy to understand the joy of the monks of those great communities, formed by Wilfrid, who had, no doubt, daily prayed for the restoration of their father. They went out to meet him in crowds, and led him back in triumph to the churches he had built for them.[239] The bishops formerly placed by Theodore at Hexham, Ripon, and York,[240] were dismissed; and the holy Bishop of Lindisfarne having voluntarily abdicated to return to his solitary rock of Fern, and there prepare for his approaching death, Wilfrid was charged to appoint his successor.

Wilfrid is recalled.

685.

20th March, 687.

The four dioceses formed by the division of the great diocese of York, which comprehended all the country north of the Humber, were thus once more united under the crosier of Wilfrid. But a restoration so complete lasted only a year: the administration of Wilfrid met great opposition at Lindisfarne. On this

Storms excited by Wilfrid at Lindisfarne.

Scripturis doctissimus. . . . Destructum regni statum quamvis intra fines angustiores nobiliter recuperavit." — BEDE, *Hist.*, iv. 26. "Qui in regionibus Scotorum lectioni operam dabat, ibi ob amorem sapientiæ spontaneum passus exilium." — BEDE, *Vita Cuthberti*, c. 14. "Ab odio germani tutus, et magno otio litteris imbutus, omni philosophia composuerat animum." — WILLELM. MALMESB., *De Gest. Reg.*, c. 52.

[238] "Ut simultatibus retropositis incunctanter caritatem ejus complecterentur." — BOLLAND., t. ii. Febr., p. 184.

[239] "In gaudio subjectorum suorum de exsilio . . . rediens." — EDDIUS, c. 43. "Crebra monachorum examina patri obviam procedunt." — EADMER, *Vita S. Wilfridi*, c. 21.

[240] This is affirmed by Eddi, a contemporary and witness of most of the facts he relates, while Bede and other authors suppose that St. John, called of Beverley, a monk of Whitby, who had been placed at Hexham in 685 by the Archbishop Theodore, was transferred to York when Wilfrid returned. Probably Bede anticipated by some years the nomination of John, who was certainly the successor of Wilfrid at York, after his second exile.

subject the venerable Bede, who was as prudent as sincere, speaks only by hints.[241] It may be divined that Wilfrid took advantage of his re-establishment in his diocese to strike a last blow at Celtic traditions, and that spirit of independence which the first Scottish apostles of Northumbria had introduced into the holy island. The changes he attempted to introduce were so unbearable to the Anglo-Saxon monks of the school of Cuthbert and his masters, that they declared themselves ready to imitate their brethren who had left Ripon at the arrival of Wilfrid. They preferred to leave the first sanctuary of Christianity, and the cradle of their order in Northumbria, rather than to yield to the tyranny of their new superior. He himself became aware that their resistance was insurmountable, and at the end of a year he gave up Lindisfarne to a new bishop who, being both wise and gentle, calmed all parties.[242]

688.

Death of the Archbishop St. Theodore. 19th Sept., 690.

About this time the prediction of Archbishop Theodore was verified; he died at the age of eighty-eight, after a pontificate of twenty-two years. His conduct towards Wilfrid is open to the widest censure, and can scarcely be explained otherwise than by the jealousy inspired in the metropolitan of England by the splendor and power of the immense bishopric of York under a ruler such as Wilfrid. But an impartial posterity owes him at least the justice rendered him by his contemporaries, and is bound to recognize in him a man who did more than any of his six predecessors to organize and consolidate the Church of England, on the double basis of Roman supremacy and of the union of the Anglo-Saxon bishoprics among themselves by their subordination to the metropolitan see of Canterbury.[243] No bishop before him had labored so much for the intellectual development of the native clergy, or for the union of the different Anglo-Saxon dynasties. The Greek monk, therefore, may well be reckoned among the founders of the English Church and nationality; and when he was

[241] "Tanta ecclesiam illam tentationis aura concussit, ut plures e fratribus loco magis cedere, quam talibus vellent interesse periculis." Then speaking of the successor of Wilfrid: "Fugatis perturbationum procellis . . . sanavit contritos corde, et alligavit contritiones eorum . . . quia post ejus (Cuthberti) obitum repellendi ac destruendi essent cives sed post ascensionem minantis iræ cælestis protinus miseratione refovendi." — *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 39.

[242] Bede, iv. 29. His name was Eadbert.

[243] "Tantum profectus spiritalis tempore præsulatus illius Anglorum ecclesiæ, quantum nunquam antea potuere, cœperunt." — Bede, v. 8.

buried, wrapped in his monastic habit in place of a shroud,[244] in the ecclesiastical burying-ground of Canterbury, it was but just that he should be laid on the right hand of St. Augustin, the Italian monk who a century earlier had cast the first seeds of faith and Christian civilization into the soul of the Anglo-Saxon race.[245]

CHAPTER V.

SECOND EXILE OF WILFRID, AND SECOND APPEAL TO ROME. — 686–705.

Rupture of Wilfrid with King Aldfrid. — New accusations against Wilfrid. — He is exiled the second time. — He is received by the King of Mercia, who gives him the bishopric of Lichfield. — He there lives eleven years in tranquil obscurity. — Theodore's successor hostile to Wilfrid, as also Abbot Adrian. — Assembly of Nesterfield. — Degrading proposals made to Wilfrid; he rejects them. — His speech. — He appeals to Rome. — Precocious talent of the Anglo-Saxons in diplomacy and despotism. — King Ethelred of Mercia remains faithful to Wilfrid. — The monks of Ripon are excommunicated. — Wilfrid's third voyage to Rome. — Contrast with the first. — Pope John VI. — The trial lasts four months, and occupies seventy sittings. — Wilfrid is acquitted. — Returning to England, he falls ill at Meaux. — His friend Acca. — His life is prolonged in answer to the prayers of his monks. — He is reconciled to the archbishop. — He goes to visit his faithful friend Ethelred, now become a monk at Bardeney. — Aldfrid, King of Northumbria, refuses to recognize the sentence of the Holy See. — He dies. — His successor expels Wilfrid within six days, but is himself dethroned. — National assembly on the banks of the Nid. — The Abbess Elfleda and the Ealdorman Bertfrid interpose on behalf of Wilfrid. — General reconciliation. — The Monasteries of Ripon and Hexham given up to him. — Influence of Anglo-Saxon princesses on the destiny of Wilfrid.

[244] "Jacebat uti a primordio erat depositus integra forma metropolitani sacerdotii pallio et monachiti tantum obductus cuculla." — GOTSELINUS, *Translatio SS. Reliq.*, l. ii. c. 27.

[245] The following lines were written by a poet of the time on the seven monks who were the first seven Archbishops of Canterbury, and who were buried side by side: —

> "Septem primates sunt Anglis et proto-patres,
> Septem rectores, septemque per æthra triones;
> Septem sunt stellæ, nitet his hæc area cellæ;
> Septem cisternæ vitæ, septemque lucernæ."

Wilfrid was fifty-six when his great rival, thus tardily transformed into a repentant and faithful ally, died; and for more than a quarter of a century his life had been one continued conflict. He might therefore hope for a little repose, and even perhaps believe it possible. But God still had in reserve for him long years of renewed trials. The first half of his history is repeated in the second with a wearisome monotony as to the events, but with the same constancy and courage in the hero of the endless struggle.[246]

Rupture of Wilfrid with King Aldfrid. 686-691.

The truce which was granted to him in the midst of his laborious career lasted but five years. It was more than once disturbed: calm and storm alternately characterized his relations with King Aldfrid, a monarch justly dear to the Northumbrians, whom his courage and ability preserved from the disastrous consequences of Egfrid's downfall. But in 691, the king, freed from the influence which Archbishop Theodore had exercised over him, as well as over all England, cast off all pretences towards the bishop, whose moral and material power was an offence to him, as it had been to his father and brother. Predisposed, also, by his education and his long residence in Ireland to favor Celtic tendencies, it may be supposed that he easily allowed himself to be influenced by the rancor and ill-will naturally entertained towards Wilfrid by the disciples and partisans of Scotic monks and bishops. Thus war was once more declared between the court of Northumbria and that exclusively Roman and Benedictine spirit of which Wilfrid was the uncompromising champion.[247]

[246] The following are the principal dates of the life of Wilfrid: —

664. Named Bishop of York and of all Northumbria.
665. Replaced by Ceadda, during his absence in France for his consecration. He retires to Ripon.
669. Recalled to York by the intervention of Theodore.
678. Dismemberment of the diocese; he is removed from York, and transferred to Lindisfarne; he refuses, and appeals to Rome.
679. On his return from Rome, with a judgment in his favor, he is imprisoned, and afterwards exiled.
686. After the death of Egfrid, he is a second time re-established.
691. Third expulsion by King Aldfrid, and second exile.
692. He is made Bishop of Lichfield.
703. Assembly of Nesterfield. Wilfrid refuses to sign his deposition. Second appeal to the Holy See; third voyage to Rome.
705. He returns to England. Assembly on the banks of the Nid; his two monasteries of Ripon and Hexham are restored to him.
709. He dies at Oundle.

[247] "Nam antiquæ inimicitiæ suasores, quasi de sopore somni excitati . . . facem dissensionis extinctam resuscitavere, quippe inter regem sapientissi-

Charges against Wilfrid.

Three complaints in chief were brought against the great bishop, two of which dated back to the origin of the struggle begun by Wilfrid between the Celts and Romanists. The matter in question was the Monastery of Ripon, founded originally for a colony of Celtic novices from Melrose, but afterwards given to Wilfrid, to the injury of the first owners, and dedicated by him to St. Peter, as if with the intention of holding up the standard under which he intended to fight. His new adversaries at first propose to deprive the Church of Ripon, the true capital of Wilfrid's spiritual kingdom, of a portion of its vast possessions, and to erect this into a new bishopric, dividing a second time the diocese of York, for the extension of Celtic influence, but in contempt of the Pontifical verdict and of the royal grant which had irrevocably guaranteed to Wilfrid and his monks the existence of this community free and exempt from all other jurisdiction.[248] Wilfrid, with his usual firmness, refused to consent to this division; upon which his adversaries changed their tactics, and reproached him for not obeying all the decrees issued by Archbishop Theodore as legate of the Holy See. This was in evident reference to the new bishoprics erected by Theodore in Wilfrid's diocese. With address worthy of a more civilized century, the theologians of the Northumbrian king thus taught him to transform the most devoted champion of Rome into an insurgent against the authority of the Holy See, and to make of the archbishop who had just died reconciled to Wilfrid, an adversary not less dangerous after his death than during his life. Wilfrid replied that he willingly recognized the statutes made by Theodore before their rupture, and after their reconciliation — that is to say, while all the churches were canonically united — but not those which dated from the interval in which division reigned. This was a sufficient pretence for his enemies to treat him as a rebel, and consign him to a new exile.

He is exiled for the second time.

Thus Wilfrid found himself, for the third time, deprived of the see to which he had been canonically appointed by the father and brother of King

mum et sanctum virum . . . iterum in concordia, atque iterum in discordia alternatim per multos annos viventes . . . usque dum postremo maxima flamma inimicitiæ exardecescente . . . expulsus recessit. Prima causa est dissensionis eorum de antiqua origine descendens." — Eddius, c. 43.

[248] "Ut monasterium quod in privilegium nobis donabatur . . . in episcopalem sedem transmutetur; et libertatem relinquere, quam sanctus Agatho et quique reges censuerunt fixe et firmiter possidere." — Eddius, c. 43.

Aldfrid twenty years before; and sentenced to a second exile for refusing to lend himself to the schemes of the adversaries of law and of monastic and ecclesiastical freedom. He sought refuge in Mercia, the country which he had so often visited in the time of his sainted friend Etheldreda, where the great Monastery of Peter's Burg, with its hitherto unquestioned independence, reminded him of ancient efforts happily accomplished, and where King Ethelred, who had been definitively won over to his side by the touching letter of the aged Archbishop Theodore, and who saw in him the representative of Roman authority, offered him effectual protection and an affection which never wavered in its fidelity.[249] This king immediately called him to the vacant see of Lichfield, which, since the new episcopal division arranged by Theodore, no longer comprehended the whole of Mercia, but which still offered a sufficient field to the apostolic zeal of Wilfrid. It was the see which had been held by the gentle and pious Ceadda, who superseded Wilfrid at York, at the time of his first quarrel with King Oswy in 665. Wilfrid now succeeded his former supplanter, changing for the fourth time his episcopal residence.[250] In this obscure and restricted sphere, he contented himself with fulfilling his duties as bishop, and awaiting better days with patience. Here he lived eleven years, and during that long interval one single trace of his active work is all that is visible — the consecration of a missionary bishop named Swidbert. This missionary, destined to be the apostle of Westphalia, had already visited that region of Friesland whither Wilfrid himself carried the first revelation of the Gospel, and whither his example had led several Anglo-Saxon monks, the traces of whose light-giving progress will be met with further on.

Wilfrid received in Mercia by King Ethelred,

Who makes him Bishop of Lichfield. 692.

691-703.

It is evident that no one thought of doing anything to carry out the intention, so clearly expressed by Theodore, of making Wilfrid his successor. On the contrary, after an interval of two years, a priest named Berchtwald, formerly a monk at Glastonbury, and afterwards abbot of a monastery built at Reculver, on the site of the palace to which the first Christian king had retired, after giving up his capital to

A descendant of Odin succeeds the Greek Theodore at Canterbury. 1st July, 692.

[249] "Ad amicum fidelem accessit . . . qui eum cum magno honore propter reverentiam apostolicæ sedis suscepit." — Eddius, c. 43.

[250] York, Hexham, Lindisfarne, and Lichfield.

Augustin, was elected to the vacant see. Berchtwald was descended from the dynasty which reigned in Mercia, and was the first of the race of Odin who took his place among the successors of the apostles.[251] One Anglo-Saxon had already figured among the archbishops of Canterbury; but as he had changed his name into the Roman appellation of *Deusdedit*, he has been reckoned among the foreign prelates, and the national historians, chronicling the promotion of Berchtwald, write proudly, "Hitherto our bishops had been Roman; from this time they were English."[252] As there was no other metropolitan in England, he had to go to Lyons to be consecrated. He presided over the English Church for nearly forty years. He was very learned, deeply imbued with the knowledge of Holy Scripture, and of monastic discipline; but the Saxon Bede acknowledges that he was far from equalling his predecessor, Theodore the Greek.[253]

21st June, 693.

But from whence arose the hostility of the new archbishop to Wilfrid? Perhaps the seeds of it had been sown in the Celto-British Monastery of Glastonbury. Except at the moment of the holy Archbishop Theodore's tardy confession and restitution, Wilfrid, from the beginning of his struggle with the Anglo-Saxon princes and prelates, seems never to have met with the least sympathy at Canterbury, the natural centre of Roman traditions and authority, and it was never thither that he went to seek a refuge in his troubles. Nothing more strongly proves to what a point national feeling already prevailed, not indeed over the power of love and respect for Catholic unity, but over all that would compromise, even in appearance, the interests or the self-love of the Anglo Saxon Church. Abbot Adrian, the friend and companion of Theodore, like him charged by the Holy See to watch over the maintenance of English orthodoxy, and who survived the archbishop nearly twenty years,[254] never extended a friendly hand to the man who, not without good cause, declared himself the dauntless champion and innocent victim of Roman unity. The case was the same, as we have already seen, with the illustrious

He is hostile to Wilfrid.

[251] He is also called Beorchtwald, and Brithwald. — Guill. Malmesb., *Gesta Reg.*, i. 29; Hook, vol. i. p. 178.

[252] *Anglo-Saxon Chron.*, an. 690.

[253] "Ecclesiasticis simul ac monasterialibus disciplinis summe instructus, tametsi prædecessori minime comparandus." — Bede, v. 8.

[254] He died in 710, having been thirty-nine years abbot of the Monastery of St. Peter or of St. Augustin at Canterbury.

and holy abbot Benedict Biscop, the founder of several new foundations, entirely Roman in spirit and heart, in the country, and even in the very diocese of Wilfrid. Is it not necessary to conclude that Wilfrid appeared, at least to his most illustrious contemporaries, to go much too far in his zeal, and to mistake the indispensable conditions of religious peace in England?

Assembly of Nesterfield. 703.

However this may have been, the new archbishop (who, we may say in passing, holds a place among the saints of the English and Benedictine calendars),[255] soon formed an alliance with King Aldfrid. The resentment of this prince had not been disarmed, nor his resolution modified, either by the long exile of Wilfrid, or by the impunity with which Bishops Bosa[256] and John had since occupied the usurped sees of Hexham and York. Twelve years after the last expulsion of Wilfrid, the king convoked an assembly in the plain of Nesterfield, near the Monastery of Ripon, which was one of the principal causes of the struggle. Almost all the British bishops were present, the Archbishop Berchtwald himself presided, and Wilfrid was invited to take part in the proceedings, under a promise that justice would be done him, according to the canon law. He came; but the promise was so far from being kept, that his presence was only made an occasion for heaping recriminations and accusations upon him. Certain bishops, probably those who occupied the sees into which his diocese had been partitioned, distinguished themselves by their bitterness; they were supported by the king, and it must be added, by several abbots, who perhaps disliked the Benedictine rule. An attempt was made to force him into an entire acceptance of all the statutes of the deceased archbishop. Wilfrid replied that he would do all they wished, provided it was agreeable to the canon law. Then turning upon his adversaries, he reproached them vehemently for the obstinacy with which for twenty-two years they had opposed the apostolic authority; he demanded under what pretence they dared to prefer the laws made by the archbishop during the division of the Church of England to the decrees of three popes specially delivered for the salvation

681-703.

[255] Under the name of Brithwaldus or Brivant, on 9th January.

[256] We have already said that this intruder figures among the English saints. Bede also calls him *Deo dilectus et sanctissimus*, v. 20. It must be remembered that he, as well as his colleague St. John of Beverley, had been trained in the school of the Abbess Hilda.

of souls in Britain? While his adversaries deliberated over the wording of their minutes, a young man attached to the service of the king, but passionately devoted to Wilfrid, who had educated him along with many other young Saxon nobles, secretly left the royal tent, and, stealing in disguise through the crowd, warned Wilfrid that a treacherous attempt would be made to obtain his signature in approval of all the council might decree — a sort of blank resignation, by means of which he might be deprived of everything he had a lawful right to, whether bishoprics or monasteries, in Northumbria, Mercia, and all other places. "After which," said this secret friend, "nothing would be left for you but to give yourself up, and lose even your episcopal character in virtue of your own signature."[257] The actual event to which this warning referred is made known to us by the account given later by Wilfrid himself to the Pope. "I sat," he said, "in my place, with my abbots, priests, and deacons, when one of the bishops came to ask, in the name of the king and the archbishop, if I submitted to the archbishop's judgment, and if I was ready to obey what should be decreed with the consent of all, yes or no? I replied that I preferred to know, in the first place, the nature of the judgment before making any engagement. The bishop insisted, saying that he himself knew nothing, that the archbishop would say nothing until I had declared in a document, signed by my hand, that I would submit to his judgment, without deviating to the right or left. I replied that I never had heard of such a proceeding, and that it was unheard-of to attempt to bind the conscience by an oath before it was known what the oath implied. However, I promised before all the assembly that I would obey with all my heart the sentence of the archbishop in everything that was not contrary to the statutes of the holy Fathers, to the canons, or to the council of the holy Pope Agathon and his

Proposals made to Wilfrid.

[257] "Multæ ac magnæ altercationum quæstiones ab eis exortæ . . . consensu quorumdam abbatum qui pacem ecclesiarum, avaritia instigante, nullatenus habere concupiverunt. . . . Multis et duris sermonibus eorum pertinaciam increpavit ac interrogavit eos quo fronte auderent. . . . Unus ex ministris . . . quem ille a primævo vagentis ætatulæ incunabulo enutrivit, ex tentorio regis latenter erupit. . . . Hac fraude te moliuntur decipere, ut primitus per scriptionem propriæ manus confirmes eorum tantummodo judicium . . . ut postquam isto alligatus fueris districtionis vinculo, de cetero in posterum permutare nullatenus queas. . . . Ad postremum temetipsum donando, de tuo sanctitatis honore cum subscriptione degraderis." — Eddius, c. 44.

orthodox successors." [258] Then the excitement rose to its height; the king and archbishop took advantage of it by a proposal to deprive Wilfrid of all that he possessed on either bank of the Humber, leaving him no shelter whatsoever in England. This extreme severity provoked a reaction in his favor, notwithstanding the double force of the royal and archiepiscopal authority. At last it was agreed to leave him the monastery which he had built at Ripon, on condition that he should sign a promise to live there peaceably, not to leave it without the permission of the king, and to give up the exercise of all episcopal functions.[259]

He rejects them, and appeals to Rome.

To this insulting proposal Wilfrid replied with an indignant eloquence, which his companion has well earned our gratitude by preserving for us. "By what right do you dare to abuse my weakness, force me to turn the murderer's sword against myself, and sign my own condemnation? How shall I, whom you accuse of no fault, make myself a scandal in the sight of all who know that for nearly forty years I have borne, though unworthy, the name of bishop? Was not I the first, after the death of those great men sent by St. Gregory, to root out the poisonous seeds sown by Scottish missionaries? Was it not I who converted and brought back the whole nation of the Northumbrians to the true Easter and the Roman tonsure, according to the laws of the Holy See? Was it not I who taught them the sweet harmonies of the primitive Church, in the responses and chants of the two alternate choirs? Was it not I who constituted monastic life among them, after the order of St. Benedict, which no one had before introduced? And after all this, I am now to express with my own hand a sudden condemnation of myself, with no crime whatever upon my conscience! As for this new persecution, by which you try to violate the sacred character with which I am invested, I appeal boldly to the Holy See. I invite any of you who desire my deposition to go there with me to receive the decision. The sages of Rome must learn the causes for which you would degrade me, before I bend to your sole will." At

[258] "Eram in concilio sedens cum abbatibus meis. . . . Respondebam quæ erat illius judicii sententia, scire prius oportet, quam confiteamur, utrum pati ea valemus exsequendo, an aliter. . . . Istius tam augustam districtionis coarctationem nunquam antea a quoquam hominum coactam audivi." — Eddius, c. 50.

[259] "Ut nec in Ultra-Umbrensium regno, nec in Merciorum minimam quidem unius domunculæ portiunculam haberet. Hujus judicii inclementia ab archiepiscopo et rege diffinita." — Eddius, c. 50.

these words the king and the archbishop cried out, "He is guilty by his own acknowledgment. He is worthy to be condemned, if only because he prefers the judgment of Rome to ours — a foreign tribunal to that of his own country." And the king added, "If you desire it, my father, I will compel him to submit by force. At least for once let him accept our sentence." The archbishop said nothing against this proposal; but the other bishops reminded the king of the safe-conduct he had promised — "Let him go home quietly, as we shall all do."[200] Such clumsy violence, addressed to objects of controversy so out of date, may no doubt cause the learned and the victorious of our day to smile; but the spirit manifested in the war made upon Wilfrid by the king and bishops is one which is never out of date. It is impossible not to be struck by the singular analogy between the means thus used and those that have been employed ever since to obtain the triumph of a bad cause. It is ever astonishing to perceive the clear-sightedness with which the Anglo-Saxons, both laymen and ecclesiastics, divined and availed themselves of weapons which seemed reserved for a more advanced state of civilization. Persecution and confiscation are of all ages; but it is a striking proof of the precocious intelligence of the Anglo-Saxons of the seventh century that they thus stigmatized as a crime and anti-national preference for foreigners that instinct and natural law which induces every victim of oppression or violence to seek justice where it is free and independent; and, above all, that they had recourse to that fine invention of a blank signature, a blind assent to the will of another, wrung from those who had been skilfully reduced to the formidable alternative of a Yes or a No. And yet the men who worked by such means were neither impious nor rascally. On the contrary, King Aldfrid ranks among the most enlightened and justly popular princes of his time.

The council breaks up.

[200] "Constanter et intrepida voce elevata. . . . Qua ex causa me compellitis ut tam lugubri calamitatis miseria in memetipsum gladium diræ interfectionis . . . convertam? Nonne si aliquo reatu suspicionis offendiculum faciam? nonne et ego primus post obitum priorum procerum a sancto Gregorio directorum, curavi ut Scoticæ virulenta plantationis germina eradicarem . . . aut quomodo juxta ritum primitivæ Ecclesiæ consono vocis modulamine binis adstantibus choris persultare . . . instruerem? Et nunc contra me quomodo subitam damnationis ipse protulero, extra conscientiam alicujus facinoris, sententiam? Fiducialiter sedem appello apostolicam. . . . Modo utique culpabilis factus a nobis notatus damnetur, quod magis illorum, quam nostrum elegit judicium." — Eddius, c. 44. "Si præcipis, pater, opprimam eum per violentiam." — Guill. Malmesb., 151, b.

The archbishop, and most of the bishops who persecuted Wilfrid, have been and still are, venerated among the saints. The only conclusion to which we can come is, that the instincts of despotism exist always and everywhere in the human heart, and that unless vigorously restrained and curbed by laws and institutions, they break out even in the best, choosing the same forms, laying the same snares, producing the same baseness, inspiring the same violences, perversities, and treacheries.

It was not without difficulty that, after the dispersion of the assembly of Nesterfield, the noble old man escaped from the violence of his enemies, and returned to Mercia to his faithful friend King Ethelred. When Wilfrid had repeated all the threats and insults with which the bishops had loaded him: "And you," said he to the king, "how do you intend to act towards me with regard to the lands and goods you have given me?" "I," replied the honest Ethelred, "I shall certainly do nothing to add to so great a wrong; nor, above all, to injure the monastic life which now flourishes in our great Abbey of St. Mary;[261] I shall on the contrary maintain it as long as I live, and will change nothing of what I have been able to do by the grace of God, until I have sent to Rome ambassadors who will accompany you, and take with them my deeds of gift. I hope they will there do me the justice deserved by a man who desires no other recompense."[262]

King Ethelred of Mercia remains faithful to him.

But while the generous Ethelred thus promised and continued his protection to the persecuted bishop and to the monks of the Burg of St. Peter, who had always so deeply interested him, the King of Northumbria and his adherents redoubled their violence and their anger. Sentence of excommunication was pronounced against the monks of Ripon, because of their fidelity to the cause of their founder, who was at the same time their abbot and bishop. Poor Eddi, who was one of them, relates with indignation how the spoilers, not content with invading the patrimony of Wilfrid, showed and excited every-

Excommunication of his monks at Ripon.

[261] The king thus designated the Abbey of Peterborough, first called Medehampstede, and situated on the borders of Mercia and East Anglia, in the fenny country, where at the same period arose Ely, Croyland, Thorney, &c.

[262] "Majorem non addo perturbationem, destruendo monachorum vitam . . . usquequo prius tecum nuntios proprios vel scripta proprietatis ad Romam præmisero interrogare de his imminentibus causis, quomodo recta desiderans salvus inveniar." — Eddius, c. 45.

where, against his disciples and partisans, the horror which attached to excommunicated persons. Food or drink which had been blessed by a monk or priest of Wilfrid's party was thrown away as if it had been offered to idols; and every cup or other utensil touched by a Wilfridian had to be washed and purified before it could be used by these pretenders to orthodoxy.[263]

The unfortunate excommunicated monks of Ripon, to whom the result of the Assembly of Nesterfield was communicated by the invectives and outrages of which they were the object, consoled themselves as they best could by redoubling their prayers and austerities, and praying night and day, in sorrowful union with all the other Wilfridian monasteries, for their aged and courageous father, who was again about to undertake the long and laborious journey to Rome.[264] Thus Wilfrid again set out, as he had done three times before, to seek enlightenment and justice from the successor of St. Peter. A party of faithful monks accompanied him; but he had no longer the stately train of former days, and it was on foot that he crossed the immense space which divided him from Rome.[265] And how many other changes were there since his first journey, when the young favorite of Queen Eanfleda travelled, with all the eagerness of a youth of twenty, towards the Eternal City! He was now seventy: he was a bishop, and had been so for forty years, but a bishop robbed of his possessions, expelled from his diocese for the third time, misunderstood, persecuted, calumniated, not only by the wicked and tyrants, but by his brethren in the episcopate, by his hierarchical superior, and by his countrymen. The old saints, the old kings, the good and holy queens, who had encouraged his first steps in the apostolic life, had disappeared, and with them how many friends, how many brothers in arms, how many disciples prematurely snatched from his paternal hopes! Not only the delightful illusions of youth, but also the generous persistence of manhood, had been compelled to give place in his soul to the consciousness

Third journey of Wilfrid to Rome.

Contrast with his first.

[263] "In tantum communionem nostram exsecraverunt, ut si quispiam . . . refectionem suam . . . signo crucis Dei benediceret, foras projiciendam ac effundendam, quasi idolo-lythum judicabant: et vasa de quibus nostri vescebantur, lavari prius, quasi sorde polluta jubebant, antequam ab aliis contingerentur." — Eddius, c. 46.

[264] "Die noctuque clamantes, in jejunio et fletu cum omnibus subjectis nostris congregationibus fundentes precem." — Eddius, c. 47.

[265] "Pedestri gressu." — Eddius, c. 47.

of treason and ingratitude and failure — failure a hundred times proved of his efforts, yet a hundred times renewed in behalf of truth, justice, and honor.

Nevertheless he went on and persevered; he held high his white head in the midst of the storm; he was as ardent, eloquent, resolute, and unconquerable in his old age as in the first days of his youth. Nothing in him betrayed fatigue, discouragement, vexation, nor even sadness.

Thus he pressed on, and, after a second stay in Friesland,[266] crossed the countries of Neustria, Austrasia, and Lombardy, all agitated and eaten up, like other nations, by the struggles and passions of this world; all wasted, desolated, and ruled by the wild license of military and material force. He advanced into the midst of them, bearing in his heart and on his countenance the love of law, a law purely spiritual, which swayed souls, which addressed hearts, and which alone could overcome, regulate, and pacify all those new and different races — a law which can never perish, but which from age to age, even to the end of the world, will inspire in its champions the same courage, constancy, and fervor, which burned in the heart of the aged Wilfrid during his long and fatiguing journey. He was going to Rome, but what might be his reception there? Would any recollection still remain of the brave young pilgrim of the time of St. Martin, the last martyr pope? or of the victorious and admired bishop of the time of St. Agathon, the Benedictine pope? Five other popes had occupied the chair of St. Peter since Agathon.[267] During this long interval, no mark of sympathy, no aid had come from Rome to Wilfrid, in all his struggles and sufferings for the cause which he loved to regard as that of the Roman Church and its law, authority, and discipline. And the apostolic throne at this moment was occupied by John VI., a Greek, countryman of that Theodore who had cost Wilfrid so many contradictions and trials.

Pope John VI.

It was to this pontiff that he and his companion presented, on their knees, their memorial, declaring that they came to accuse no one, but to defend themselves

[266] It is only at this period of Wilfrid's life that I can place his residence in Friesland with his pupil Willibrord, whose successor, Acca, entertained Bede, and of whom the latter speaks in his *Ecclesiastical History*, book iii. chap 3.

[267] Leo II., Benedict II., John IV., Conon, Sergius I. From a passage of Wilfrid's speech at Nesterfield, it appears that Popes Benedict II. and Sergius had interposed in his favor, but no trace of their acts on the subject has been preserved.

against accusations, by flying to the foot of his glorious see as to the bosom of a mother, and submitting themselves beforehand to all that his authority might prescribe. Accusers could not have been wanting, for there soon arrived envoys from the holy Archbishop Berchtwald, with a written denunciation of Wilfrid.[268] The Pope inquired into the matter in a council at which many bishops and all the Roman clergy were present. Eddi, who must have accompanied his bishop to Rome this time also, has preserved the details in full. Wilfrid perceived the necessity of being conciliatory and moderate in his pretensions, and restrained his ambition within the bounds of a humble prayer. He read before the assembly a paper, in which he recalled to its recollection the decrees given in his favor by Popes Agathon, Benedict, and Sergius, and demanded the execution of them in his own name and in that of the monks who had accompanied him to Rome. He then entreated the Pope to recommend King Ethelred to guarantee to him, against all covetousness or enmity, the monasteries and domains which he held from the Mercian kings for the redemption of their souls. Finally, in case the complete execution of the Pontifical decrees, which had ordained his reinstatement in his bishopric and in all his patrimony, should appear too hard to the King of Northumbria, the generous old man consented to give up his diocese of York, with all the monasteries depending on it, to be disposed of at the Pope's pleasure, except his two beloved foundations of Ripon and Hexham, which he asked to be allowed to retain, with all their possessions. In another sitting the messengers of Berchtwald were heard in their turn. They declared, as their chief accusation, that Bishop Wilfrid, in full council at Nesterfield, had cast contempt upon the decrees of the Archbishop of Canterbury, whom the Holy See had placed at the head of all the churches of Great Britain. Then Wilfrid rose, and, with all the authority he derived from his venerable age, related what had really occurred. His tale gained the sympathies of the whole assembly; and the bishops, while showing the most amiable aspect to the friends of Wilfrid, began to talk Greek among themselves, so as not to be understood by the English.[269] They then addressed

[268] "Neminem per invidiam accusandum advenimus. . . . Interim legati a sancto archiepiscopo Berchtvaldo cum suis scriptis accusationis directis . . . pervenerunt." — Eddius, c. 47.

[269] "Stans episcopus noster, venerabili senio confectus, cum fratribus suis venerabilibus in conspectu totius congregationis. . . . Tunc inter se græcizantes et subridentes nos . . . loqui cœperunt."

the Canterbury envoys as follows: "You know, dear brethren, that those who do not prove their chief accusation ought not to be allowed to prove the rest; however, to do honor to the archbishop-legate, and to this holy bishop Wilfrid, we will examine the matter fundamentally in all its details."

The council holds seventy sittings. 703-704.

And, in fact, they held, during four months, seventy sittings. This was certainly giving a scrupulous, and, it may be said, amazing attention to a cause which may have appeared to the Italian bishops as but of secondary and far-off interest; and nothing better proves the conscientious solicitude brought by the Church of Rome to bear on the judgment of all causes submitted to her, as well as her unquestionable authority. Wilfrid appeared before his judges almost daily, and underwent a minute examination.[270] In these debates the aged orator displayed all the vigor and energy of his youth. He overturned by a word the most unforeseen objections of his accusers; with a presence of mind, which God and the truth alone could have inspired, he swept away their arguments like spiders' webs: it was a true torrent of eloquence, as says a monastic historian who, many centuries after, was still proud of the effect produced by the words of the old Saxon bishop upon the astonished Romans.[271] Nothing contributed more to the ultimate triumph of Wilfrid than the discovery, made in studying the precedents of the case, of his presence at the council held against the Monothelites twenty-four years before.[272] In the course of reading the acts of the former council, which was done by order of the Pope, in presence not only of the clergy but also of the nobles and people of Rome, when they came to a passage which proved the presence of Wilfrid, then as now accused, but triumphantly acquitted, and admitted to bear witness to the faith of the other bishops of Great Britain, the assembly was confounded, the reader stopped short, and each man asked himself who this other Wilfrid was.[273] Then Boniface, an old

[270] "Per quatuor menses et septuaginta conciliabula sanctissimæ sedis, de fornace ignis . . . purificatus evasit. Pene quotidie in conflictu diligenter examinatus." — Eddius, c. 50, 52.

[271] "Mirantibus Romanis . . . illius eloquentiam, dum quicquid accusationum objecissent, ille nullo excogitato responso, sed Dei et veritatis fultus auxilio, quasi casses aranearum primo motu labiorum discuteret et subrueret . . . venerandum senem . . . torrentem eloquentiæ." — Guill. Malmesb., f. 152.

[272] See page 388.

[273] "Cum ergo causa exigente synodus eadem coram nobilibus et frequentia populi jubente apostolico diebus aliquot legeretur, ventum est ad locum

counsellor of the Pope, who had lived in the time of Agathon, declared that the Wilfrid who was thus again brought to their bar was assuredly the same Wilfrid whom Pope Agathon had formerly acquitted and placed by his side as a man of irreproachable faith and life. When this was understood, the Pope and all the others declared that a man who had been forty years a bishop, instead of being persecuted in this manner, ought to be sent back with honor to his own country; and the sentence of absolution was unanimously pronounced. Wilfrid is acquitted.

The Pope summed up and terminated the entire discussion in a letter to the two Kings of Northumbria and Mercia. After having reminded them of the sentence given by Pope Agathon, and described the regularity of the new trial over which he had himself presided, he enjoined Archbishop Berchtwald to convoke a council along with Bishop Wilfrid, to summon Bishops Bosa and John (who occupied the usurped sees of York and Hexham), and after having heard them, to end the differences between them, if he could; if not, to send them to the Holy See to be tried by a more numerous council, under pain, for the recalcitrants, of being deposed and rejected by all bishops and by all the faithful. "Let your royal and Christian majesties," said the Pope in conclusion, "for the fear of God, and for love of that peace which our Lord left to His disciples, lend us your help and assistance, that those matters into which, by the inspiration of God, we have fully examined, may have their due effect; and may the recompense of so religious a work avail you in heaven, when, after a prosperous reign on earth, you enter among the happy company of the eternal kingdom." [274]

Wilfrid thus issued from what his friend calls the furnace in which God completed his purification. He and his followers thought themselves the victors; and although the sentence against his adversaries was neither severe nor definite, the sequel showed clearly that it was all the state of the English mind could endure. It was even Wilfrid's desire, instead of availing himself of the Pope's Wilfrid returns to England. 705.

ubi scriptum erut *Wilfridus Deo amabilis*, etc. Quod ubi lectum est, stupor adprehendit audientes: et silente lectore, cœperunt alterutrum requirere quis esset ille Wilfridus episcopus." — Bede, v. 20.

[274] "Omnia quæque in scriptis, vel anterioribus, vel modernis, partes detulerunt, vel hic inveniri potuerunt, vel a partibus verbaliter dicta sunt, subtiliter inquisita, ad cognitionem nostram perducta sunt. . . . Vestra proinde Christiana et regalis Sublimitas . . . subventum faciat atque concursum."

decision, to remain in Rome and end his days in penitence. He obeyed, however, when the Pope and council constrained him to set out, forbidding him, at the same time, to continue the cold baths which he had every night imposed upon himself as a mortification; and after visiting for the last time all the sanctuaries which were so dear to him, he left Rome, carrying with him a new provision of relics and of rich sacerdotal vestments for the Saxon churches.

He made the return journey not on foot, but on horseback; which, however, was too much for his old age; and this new journey through Italy, the Alps, and France, added to his many travels, affected him so much, that he fell dangerously ill before reaching his destination. After this he had to be carried in a litter, and arrived, apparently dying, at Meaux. There he lay for four days and nights, his eyes closed, neither speaking nor eating, and in a state of apparent unconsciousness; his breathing alone showed that he still lived. On the fifth day he raised himself in his bed, and seeing round him a crowd of monks, who chanted the psalms, weeping, he said, "Where is my priest Acca?"[275] This was a monk of Lindisfarne, of great learning and fervor, and an excellent musician, who, though educated by one of the rivals of Wilfrid, the intruding bishop of York, had left his first master to follow Wilfrid for love of Roman orthodoxy, and had accompanied him to Rome on this last and laborious journey.[276] Seeing his master thus revived, Acca fell on his knees with all present to thank God. Then they talked together with holy awe of the last judgment. On which Wilfrid, having sent away all the rest of his attendants, said to Acca, "I have just had a vision which I will only confide to you, and of which I forbid you to speak until I know the will of God regarding it. A being clothed in white has appeared to me; he told me

He falls sick at Meaux.

Acca.

An addition of four years of life is granted to the prayers of his monks.

[275] "Feretro portatus . . . tantum halitus et calida membra vivum demonstrabant . . . resedit, apertisque oculis vidit circa se choros psaltentium simul et flentium fratrum. . . . Ubi est Acca presbyter?" — EDDIUS, c. 53; BEDE, v. 29.

[276] "Doctissimus . . . castissimus . . . in ecclesiasticæ institutionis regulis . . . solertissimus, cantator peritissimus . . . deinde ad Wilfridum episcopum spe melioris propositi adveniens . . . cum quo etiam Romam veniens, multa illic quæ in patria nequiverat, Ecclesiæ sanctæ institutis utilia didicit." — BEDE, v. 20. Bede dedicated his *Hexameron* to Acca, who first became Abbot and then Bishop of Hexham after Wilfrid, and died only in 740. He has a place among the saints, and his miracles are told among those of Wilfrid. — *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, vol. iii. p. 204–220.

that he was the Archangel Michael, sent to tell me that God had spared my life in answer to the prayers and tears of my brethren and my children, as well as to the intervention of the Holy Virgin His Mother.[277] He added that I should yet live several years, and should die in my own country, and in peace, after having regained the greater part of that which has been taken from me." And in fact he did recover, and pursued his journey without any further hinderance.

He is reconciled to Archbishop Berchtwald.

As soon as he landed in England, he caused his return to be announced to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who, already informed by his envoys of Wilfrid's success at Rome, yielded to apostolic authority, was sincerely reconciled to him, and promised to pronounce the revocation of the decrees of the Assembly of Nesterfield. They had a friendly interview near London, in presence of a multitude of abbots from various monasteries of Wilfrid's party.[278] From London Wilfrid went to Mercia, but not to find his friend Ethelred on the throne. The preceding year, in the very midst of Wilfrid's labors at Rome, his old friend had made up his mind to exchange the cares of royalty for the peace of the cloister, and had become a monk at Bardeney, in the monastery where his wife, Ostryda of Northumbria, assassinated seven years before by the Mercian lords, had, not without difficulty, succeeded in placing the relics of her uncle, the holy King Oswald.[279]

704.

He visits his faithful friend Ethelred, now a monk at Bardeney.

675-704.

Ethelred, who had as yet no saint in his own family, thus found a patron both powerful and popular in England, and even elsewhere,[280] in the family of his wife; and it was beside the relics of this venerated uncle that he decided to end his life after a reign of nearly thirty-one years. There Wilfrid

[277] "Visio mihi modo tremenda apparuit. . . . Adstitit mihi quidam . . . dicens se Michaelem archangelum." — Bede, v. 19. It was to commemorate this intercession of the Mother of God that Wilfrid on his return to Hexham caused the Church of St. Mary to be erected, of which some remains may be seen near the great church of the ancient priory; it was of a form quite new in England: "Ecclesiam construxerat opere rotundo, quam quatuor porticus, quatuor respicientes mundi climata, ambiebant." — Ælredus, *De Sanctis Ecclesiæ Hagulstadensis*, c. 5.

[278] "Apostolica auctoritate coactus, et per nuntios suos directis scriptis territus et tremebundus, pacifice et sine simulatione (sicut rei eventus probavit) sancto pontifici nostro reconciliatus est." — Eddius, c. 54.

[279] See above, p. 299, the resistance of the Mercian monks to the religious practices of the Northumbrian king.

[280] In Friesland and Ireland. — Bede, iii. 13.

sought him; and finding his old friend, his generous host, and faithful protector, clad in the same monastic habit as himself, and weeping for joy at his return, Wilfrid threw himself into his arms; and the two clapsed each other in this embrace in one of those moments of perfect union and sympathy which God sometimes grants to two generous hearts which have together struggled and suffered in His cause.[281]

The bishop then showed the king the Pope's letter addressed to him, which contained the apostolic judgment, with the bulls and seals all in order. Ethelred, having read it, cried, "I will neither infringe it nor allow it to be infringed in the smallest particular while I live; I will support it with all my power." He immediately sent for his nephew, who had succeeded him on the Mercian throne, told him of the Pope's decision, and conjured him to execute it fully in everything connected with the Wilfridian monasteries in their kingdom. The new king promised willingly, with all the eagerness of a man already inclined to that monastic life which he afterwards embraced in his own person.

King Aldfrid refuses to recognize the judgment of the Holy See.

But Wilfrid was not at the end of his troubles. Mercia had always been to him a friendly and hospitable country. It was a different matter in Northumbria. Ethelred advised him to send to Aldfrid two monks whom the king favored, an abbot and the professor of theology at Ripon, to inquire whether he would receive Bishop Wilfrid with the verdict given at Rome. The king at first made an evasive answer, but on his second interview with these ambassadors, by the advice of his counsellors, he refused. "Dear and venerable brothers," he said to them, "ask what you will for yourselves, and I will give it you willingly; but do not ask anything in behalf of your master Wilfrid; he was judged in the first place by my predecessors in concert with Archbishop Theodore and their counsellors, and afterwards by myself, with the concurrence of another archbishop sent by the Holy See, and almost all the bishops of the country; so long as I live I will change nothing out of regard to what you call a mandate of the Holy See."[282] This speech sounds

[281] "Ad Ethelredum . . . semper fidelissimum amicum, nimirum pro nimio gaudio lachrymantem. . . . Mitissime cum salutavit, osculantes et amplexantes se invicem; honorifice ab amico more suo susceptus erat." — Eddius, c. 54. Cf. Bede, v. 19.

[282] "Sicut consiliarii ejus persuaserunt. . . . O fratres, mihi amplo ven-

like an anticipation of the famous *Nolumus leges Anglicæ mutare* of the English barons in the days of the Plantagenets.

Death of King Aldfrid. 705.

"As long as I live," said King Aldfrid; but he had not long to live. He soon after fell dangerously ill, and believed himself smitten by God, and punished for his contempt of apostolic authority. He openly confessed his sin against Wilfrid, expressed his desire to receive a visit from him before his death, and vowed, if he recovered, to conform to the desires of the bishop and the sentence of the Pope. "If it be the will of God," said he, "that I should die, I command my successor, whosoever he may be, in the name of the Lord, for the repose of my soul and his own, to make peace with Wilfrid."[283] Many witnesses heard these words, and chief among them his sister, Princess Elfleda, Abbess of Whitby, who, since the death of her other brother Egfrid, twenty years before, had been completely won to the interests of Wilfrid.[284] Soon afterwards Aldfrid lost the power of speech, and died. He left none but young children, and the Northumbrian crown descended to a prince named Eadwulf. Wilfrid, who had already returned to Ripon, and who, it is not known why, counted on the new king's favor, was preparing to go to him, when Eadwulf, by the advice of his counsellors, and perhaps of the Witena-Gemot, which had misled Aldfrid, gave him to understand that if he did not leave Northumbria within six days, all his followers who could be seized should be put to death.[285]

His successor expels Wilfrid within six days.

He is himself dethroned, and replaced by Osred, son of Aldfrid.

But the prosperous days of Northumbria were over, and civil wars were about to destroy the order and prosperity which had reigned there since the establishment of national independence during the great reign of Oswy. Bernicia revolted in the name of the eldest son of Aldfrid. This was a child of eight

erabiles . . . quia quod ante prædecessores mei reges et archiepiscopus cum consiliariis suis censuerunt, et quod postea nos cum archiepiscopo ab apostolica sede emisso . . . judicavimus: hoc, inquam, quamdiu vixero, propter apostolicæ sedis (ut dicitis) scripta, nunquam volo mutare." — Eddius, c. 55.

[283] "Præcipio in nomine Domini, quicumque mihi in regnum successerit, ut cum Wilfrido episcopo pro remedio animæ meæ et suæ pacem et concordiam ineat." — Eddius, c. 56.

[284] "Ælfleda abbatissa et sapientissima virgo, quæ est vere filia regis." — *Ibid.*

[285] "Persuasus a consiliariis suis. . . . Per salutem meam juro, nisi de regno meo in spatio sex dierum discesserit, de sodalibus ejus quoscumque invenero, morte peribunt." — Eddius, c. 56.

years old, named Osred, who was already considered as the adopted son of Wilfrid.[286] By means of some mysterious influence, the nature of which is unknown, the aged exile Wilfrid, who had been expelled from the country for fourteen years, and was to all appearance forgotton, betrayed, and set aside, became all at once the master of the situation, and the arbiter of events.

He soon acquired a more powerful protector than the young sovereign in the person of an ealderman named Bertfrid, who was considered the most powerful noble in the kingdom, and who was at the head of Osred's party. King Eadwulf marched against the insurgents, and obliged them to retreat to the fortress of Bamborough, capital of the first Northumbrian kings, near the holy isle of Lindisfarne. Bertfrid and his men, shut up in the narrow enclosure of this fortified rock, were reduced to the last extremity, and not knowing what saint to invoke, they made a vow that, if God would deliver them, and give to their young prince the throne of his father, they would fulfil exactly the judgment of the Holy See regarding their aged bishop.[287] Scarcely had this vow been solemnly taken by the besieged when a change took place in the minds of their assailants. A number of Eadwulf's followers forsook him and came to an understanding with Bertfrid, who made a sally at the head of his garrison, by which Eadwulf was vanquished, dethroned, and himself exiled, after a short reign of two months over the kingdom from which he had brutally expelled the venerable bishop.

National assembly on the banks of the Nid.

As soon as the royal child was placed on the throne, the Archbishop of Canterbury made his appearance, perceiving that the time was come for executing the apostolic judgment, and definitely settling Wilfrid's affairs in a general assembly. This was held in the open air on the banks of the Nid, a river which flows a little to the south of the fertile plain in which Wilfrid's Abbey of Ripon was situated. The council was composed of the three bishops who shared among them the diocese of Wilfrid, and of all the abbots and nobles of Northum-

[286] "Regnavit puer regius . . . et sancto pontifici nostro filius adoptivus factus est."

[287] "Undique circumcincti hostili manu in angustiaque rupis lapideæ mansimus; inito consilio inter nos, si Deus nostro regali puero regnum patris cui concessisset, quæ mandavit sancta apostolica auctoritas de sancto Wilfrido episcopo adimplere, Deo spopondimus." — Eddius, c. 57.

bria; it was presided over by the archbishop, who had the king by his side. Wilfrid too was present, and met there his two powerful adherents, Bertfrid and the Abbess Elfleda. This noble and sainted princess, sister of the three last kings of Northumbria, and sister-in-law of two neighboring kings, those of East Anglia and Mercia, was yet more influential on account of her virtues than of her birth. All the Northumbrians regarded her as the consoler and best counsellor of the kingdom. The archbishop opened the sitting with these words, "Let us pray the Holy Spirit to send peace and concord into all our hearts. The blessed Wilfrid and myself have brought you the letter which the Holy See has addressed to me by his hands, and which shall now be read to you."[288] He then read the pontifical decrees delivered in the different councils at Rome. A dead silence followed; on which Bertfrid, who was universally recognized as the first personage in the kingdom after the king, said, "We do not understand Latin, and we beg that you will translate to us the apostolic message."[289] The archbishop undertook the necessary translation, and made all understand that the Pope ordered the bishops to restore to Wilfrid his churches, or that all parties should go to Rome to be judged there, under pain of excommunication and deposition to all opposers, lay or ecclesiastical, even including the king himself.[290] Nevertheless the three bishops[291] (all of whom have places among saints) did not hesitate to combat this decision, appealing to the decrees made by King Egfrid and Archbishop Theodore, and to those of the Assembly of Nesterfield, under Aldfrid. At this point the holy Abbess Elfleda interposed: in a voice which all listened to as an utterance from heaven, she described the last illness and agony of the king her brother, and how he had vowed to God and St. Peter to accomplish all the decrees he had before rejected. "This," she said, "is the last will of Aldfrid the king; I attest the truth of it before Christ."

Abbess Elfleda and Count Bertfrid intervene in favor of Wilfrid.

[288] "Rex cum totius regni sui principibus et tres episcopi ejus cum abbatibus, nec non et beata Eanfleda abbatissa semper totius provinciæ consolatrix, optimaque consiliatrix . . . sedentibus in loco synodali. . . . Habemus, enim ego et beatus Wilfridus episcopus, scripta apostolica." — Eddius, c. 57.

[289] "Nos qui interpretatione indigemus."

[290] "Si quis contemnens . . . sciat se, si rex sit aut laicus, a corpore et sanguine Christi excommunicatum: si vero episcopus aut presbyter . . . ab omni gradu ecclesiastico degradari."

[291] These three bishops were, Bosa of York, John of Hexham, and Eadfrid of Lindisfarne, bishop since 698.

Bertfrid afterwards spoke in the name of the king, commencing thus: "The desire of the king and nobles is, in all things, to obey the commandment of the Holy See and of King Aldfrid."[292] He then related the history of the siege of Bamborough, and the vow which bound the consciences of the victors.

General reconciliation.

Nevertheless the three bishops would not yield; they retired from the assembly to confer among themselves, and with Archbishop Berchtwald, but above all with the sagacious Elfleda. Thanks to her, and thanks also to the extreme moderation of Wilfrid, who required only the minimum of the conditions imposed at Rome, all ended in a general reconciliation. It was decreed that there should be perpetual peace and alliance between the Northumbrian bishops, the king, and the thanes on one side, and Bishop Wilfrid on the other; but that Wilfrid should content himself with his two best monasteries, and the large possessions attached to them — that is, with Ripon, where no new bishopric had been erected, and Hexham, into the see of which he entered; its late titular holder, John of Beverley, being, by a fresh concession made for the sake of peace, removed to York.[293]

As soon as the treaty was concluded, the five bishops embraced, and received the holy communion together. The assembly dispersed amidst general rejoicing, which soon spread all over Northumbria. The most inveterate enemies of Wilfrid were glad of a peace which gave repose to their consciences. But the cloisters and arches of the Wilfridian monasteries echoed with the voice of a more enthusiastic gladness, receiving back again multitudes of disciples and monks, some of whom had been dispersed by persecution and exile, some enslaved by detested masters, who hastened with delight to find themselves once more under the sway of a father whom all the world henceforth considered as a saint, and who had always possessed the faculty of inspiring a passionate affection in his children.[294]

[292] "Episcopi vero resistentes . . . beatissima Elfleda abbatissima benedicto suo ore dicebat: Vere in Christo dico testamentum Aldfridi regis. Præfatus regis princeps, respondens dixit: Hæc est voluntas regis et principum ejus."

[293] It is not known what the arrangement was in respect to Bosa, the intruding Bishop of York, who died most opportunely about this time. — Bede, v. 3. As to the bishopric of Lindisfarne, it remained in the hands of the new titular, Bishop Eadfrid.

[294] "Redduntes ei duo optima cœnobia . . . cum omnibus redditibus suis. . . . Et hæc est maxima beatitudo ex utraque parte, tam illorum . . . quam

This was the last act of Wilfrid's public life. It began in that famous assembly where the Celtic Church was bound by his youthful and vigorous influence to the feet of Roman tradition — an assembly which partook at once of the character of a council and a parliament, presided over by King Oswy, in presence of the Abbess St. Hilda, and held at her monastery. He ended his career, after forty years of unwearied struggles, in another assembly of the same kind, held in presence of the grandson of Oswy, and influenced in the highest degree by another Abbess of Whitby, the gentle Elfleda, who was, like Hilda, a saint and a princess of that Northumbrian dynasty with the destinies of which those of Wilfrid were so intimately connected.

Influence of the Anglo-Saxon princesses over the destiny of Wilfrid.

It is impossible not to be struck by the great and singular influence exercised over the destiny of Wilfrid by women, or, to speak more correctly, by the Anglo-Saxon princesses whose contemporary he was. It is a peculiarity found in the history of no other saint, and which few historic personages manifest to the same degree. Many, such as St. Paulinus, St. Jerome, St. Augustin, St. Francis d'Assisi, St. François de Sales, St. Jean de la Croix, have owed to their wives, their mothers, their sisters, and their spiritual friends, a portion of their glory and some of their best inspirations; but we know none whose life has been so completely transformed or modified by the affection or the hatred of women. He was protected in his youth and seconded in his monastic vocation by the granddaughter of St. Clotilda, who then shared the throne of Northumbria; and it was by encouraging another queen of that country, St. Etheldreda, to change her married life for that of the cloister, that he drew upon himself his first misfortune. A third Queen of Northumbria, whom he had indirectly aided to take the place of his spiritual daughter, Etheldreda, persecuted him for two years with a bitterness which she communicated to her sister the Queen of Wessex, and her sister-in-law the Queen of Mercia; and the three together uniting their efforts, used their influence with the kings their husbands to aggravate the distresses of the proscribed bishop, until the time when the Queen of the pagan Saxons of the South, herself a Christian, secured him an asylum, and offered him a nation to convert.

nostrorum, qui per diversa exsilia dispersi, tristes sub alienis dominis servi eramus, nunc enim . . . capite charissimo . . . gaudentes et exultantes in benedictione vivimus."

Those princesses who had forsaken the life of the world to govern great monastic communities were not less mingled with his stormy career. The abbess-queen of Ely, St. Etheldreda, continued to follow his counsels in the cloister as on the throne. St. Hilda, the Abbess of Whitby, pursued him with an enmity as constant as the affection of her niece; while St. Ebba, the Abbess of Coldingham, interfered in his favor, and delivered him from a painful captivity. It has just been seen how St. Elfleda, the sister and daughter of the four Northumbrian kings under whom he had lived, after inheriting the crosier of St. Hilda, came forward as the advocate and protectress of the prelate, contributing more than any other to his last triumph. Finally, he himself, when more than seventy years old, and on his death-bed, left his vestments to her whom he called "his abbess," to Cyndreda, who owes her place in the history of the Church and the history of souls to this latest homage of the aged champion of Rome and of spiritual independence.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST YEARS OF WILFRID. — 705-709.

Wilfrid's illness assembles all the abbots of his monasteries about him. — He divides his treasures: his farewell to the monks of Ripon. — His last journey to Mercia. — He consecrates the Church of Evesham monastery. — Bishop Egwin of Worcester and the smiths. — Vision of the three virgins in the forest. — Simon de Montfort, creator of the House of Commons, buried at Evesham. — Wilfrid narrates all his life to his successor Tatbert. — His death. — His funeral at Ripon. — His worship and his miracles. — He appears with St. Cuthbert to relieve Hexham against the Scots: the Christian Dioscuri. — His banner appears at the battle of the Standard. — Services which he rendered to the monastic order, to the Church of England, to the universal Church, to the English nation. (Note on the Culdees of York.) — He begins that long succession of pontiff-confessors which has no rival out of the Church of England. — His character.

Wilfrid's illness gathers all his abbots

WILFRID passed the four last years of his life in peace at his Monastery of Hexham, which had, though not by his will, become a cathedral and the

seat of a diocese, the last of those of which he had been successively bishop.[295] As he travelled on one occasion from Hexham to Ripon, he was attacked by a sudden faint, even more serious than that which seized him at Meaux. He was carried into a house on the roadside, and there ensued a scene which proves the love with which he was regarded, and how it was at once a bishop, a king, and a father whom his great and powerful monastic family was about to lose. At the first report of his illness all the abbots of his numerous monasteries, and even the anchorites who had gone out from his foundations, hurried to Hexham. Distance was no obstacle to them; they travelled day and night, questioning every passer-by, and continuing their course with hastened steps or saddened hearts according as the answer they received told them that their father was yet living, or that they would arrive too late. It was the desire of all to see once again their master and beloved father, and to join their prayers and tears to those of the community, that he might be permitted to regain consciousness, and to put his succession in order by dividing his property, and naming the future superiors of all his houses;[296] for his influence was everywhere so great that the monks had given up their right to elect their own chiefs, which was, however, one of the constitutional principles of the Benedictine order. Their prayers were heard. Wilfrid recovered; but considering himself to have been thus warned that the time fixed by the archangel in his vision at Meaux would soon expire, he occupied himself in putting all his affairs in order, in preparation for his death. When he arrived at Ripon, he had the door of his treasury opened by the official who kept the keys, in presence of the two abbots of his monasteries in Mercia, and of eight of the most devout monks. It is curious to note the inexperience of the persecutors and spoilers of those remote times, which is shown by the fact that, after his two periods of exile, his condemnations, and his long absence, this treasury, left in the keeping of a few monks and often of unfriendly superiors, in the midst of a country whose government had been for

around his couch.

He proceeds to the distribution of his treasure.

[295] York in 665, Lindisfarne 678, Lichfield 681, and Hexham in 705.

[296] "Cum intimo cordis mœrore . . . indesinenter diu noctuque canentes et deprecantes . . . omnes abbates ejus de suis locis et anachoretæ concito cursu pergentes . . . secundum traditiones hominum de morte ejus hæsitantes. . . . Ne nos quasi orbatos sine abbatibus relinqueret . . . ut et omnem vitam nostram in diversis locis secundum suum desiderium sub præpositis a se electis constitueret." — Eddius, c. 58.

thirty years at constant war with Wilfrid, still contained treasure enough to make up four large portions of gold, silver, and precious stones. "My dearest brothers," said Wilfrid to the ten witnesses of his last wishes, "I have thought for some time of returning yet once more to that see of Peter from which I received justice and freedom, to end my life there. I shall take with me the chief of these four portions for an offering to the basilicas of Santa Maria Maggiore and St. Paul the Apostle. But if, as often happens to the old, I should die before accomplishing my wishes, I enjoin you, my faithful friends, to send these gifts to the churches I mention. Of the other three parts, you must divide one among the poor of my people for the salvation of my soul. Another shall be for the use of the two future abbots of Hexham and Ripon, and will enable them to conciliate the king and the bishops by gifts; and the last is for those who shared with me the long fatigues of exile, and to whom I cannot leave lands, that they may still have the means of living after my death." Here he stopped, overcome perhaps by emotion or fatigue; but after a while he resumed: "Remember that I appoint the priest Tatbert, my cousin, who up to this day has never left me, to be prior of the Monastery of Ripon, to take my place while I live, and to succeed me when I die. I do all this that the Archangel Michael may find me ready when my hour arrives; and I do not think it is far off." [297]

His farewell to the monks of Ripon.

When he had finished these arrangements, he caused the bell to be rung to summon his monastic family around him. When all the monks were assembled in the chapter-house, he entered, and sat down in the midst of them. "Your prior Celin," he said, "has for a long time labored in all the duties of monastic life; I can no longer refuse him permission to return to the life of solitude and contemplation for which he thirsts. I exhort you to preserve scrupulously the regularity of your life until I return and bring you the person I judge worthy to be your superior. But if it please God that I do not return, take him who shall be pointed out to you by these my fellow-travellers: make him your abbot, and pay him the obedience

[297] "Gazophylacium aperire claviculario præcepit. . . . Alteram partem inter se dividant, ut cum muneribus regis et episcoporum amicitiam impetrare potuerint. Tertiam vero partem iis qui mecum longa exsilia perpessi laboraverunt. . . . Hæc statuta dico ut me Michael archangelus visitans paratum inveniat." — Eddius, c. 59.

you have promised to God and to me." At these words, in which they foreboded a last farewell, all the monks fell on their knees weeping, and, bending their heads to the earth, promised to obey him. While they thus remained prostrate, Wilfrid blessed them, recommended them from the bottom of his tender heart to God, and departed, to see them no more.[298]

His last journey in Mercia.

The new King of Mercia, Ceonred, nephew of his old friend Ethelred, had invited him to visit and confer with him at once as to the state of the Mercian monasteries and of his own soul; for, drawn by the example of his uncle towards monastic life, he wished to consult Wilfrid before joining that uncle in the cloister. The aged saint obeyed this call, and, crossing the Humber for the last time, entered Mercia, where he visited one after another all the monasteries he had founded or adopted in that great kingdom, making everywhere arrangements similar to those he had made at Ripon to further the well-being and security of his different communities.[299] He even went in this last effort of his old age to a district in which he had founded no monastic houses, into the country of the Wicciens, on the borders of the Welsh Celts and Western Saxons, to consecrate a Benedictine church just built at Evesham by the young King of the Mercians and Bishop Egwin.

Consecration of the Monastery of Evesham, founded by Egwin, Bishop of Worcester. 689.

The name of Egwin is worthy of a moment's pause in our narrative. He was a scion of the reigning dynasty of Mercia, and had been, in his youth, made bishop of one of the new bishoprics created by Theodore, at Worcester; but the post was a difficult one, and, notwithstanding his unwearied self-devotion, he did not succeed in purifying or regulating the morals of his flock. They would neither obey nor even listen to him. One day

[298] "Pulsato signo tota familia Hryporum simul in unum congregata est . . . geniculantes lacrymantesque, inclinato capite in terram . . . pronique orantes . . . et ab eo die ultra faciem ejus simul non viderunt." — Eddius, c. 50.

[299] "Abbates suos omnes in adventu suo gaudentes invenit . . . et unicuique eorum secundum suam mensuram, aut cum terris vitam monachorum suorum augmentavit, aut cum pecunia corda eorum lætificavit." — Eddius, c. 61. To the various monasteries, the foundation of which by Wilfrid we have described, and the names of which are known, such as Hexham, Ripon, Peterborough, Ely, and Selsey, we ought to add Stamford, in the part of Mercia conquered by the Northumbrians, which was given to him on his first return from Rome to England, by his friend the young King Alchfrid.

when he had preached against the habitual vices of the population, in a great forge situated in the depths of a wood, the smiths, far from ceasing their work, struck as hard as possible with their hammers on the anvils, so as to deafen him and drive him away.[300] His zeal for the strict observance of the marriage vow among these new Christians had above all irritated them against him.

To put an end to the persecutions and calumnies with which he was loaded, he determined to go, following Wilfrid's example, to justify himself before the Holy See. Though he did not admit the truth of any of the accusations brought against him, he yet remembered with confusion certain sins of his youth, and to expiate them determined to undertake this long journey with his feet loaded with iron chains, and, thus voluntarily fettered, entered Rome, where Pope Constantine did him entire justice.[301] Two years after his first pilgrimage he went again to Rome, from whence he brought back the Papal charter for the monasteries which a singular circumstance had determined him to build in a forest given him by King Ethelred. A swineherd, pushing his way through the tufted thickets of this wood, once came to a clearing where he saw three lovely girls seated, whose beauty appeared to him more brilliant than the sun; the one in the middle held a book, and all three were singing celestial harmonies. Modern learning

Vision of the three virgins in the forest.

[300] "Cum conflandi ferrum locus esset aptissimus, et fabris et ferri excussoribus maxime repleretur, gens incredula incudes malleis ferreis tanto strepitu continuo percutiebat, ut beati viri sermo non audiretur. . . . Præ concussione, immo confusione malleorum et incudum adhuc tinniebant ambæ aures ejus, ac si percutientes incudes eum suquerentur." — *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. iii. p. 322, and *Chronic. Abbatiæ de Evesham*, London, 1863, p. 26. The legend written in the eleventh century by a Prior of Evesham adds that the forge and its inhabitants were swallowed up by an earthquake, and that since then no one has been able to exercise the trade of a smith on the site of the *castrum* thus punished, a story which suggests the following verse of Ovid —

"Pœna potest demi, culpa perennis erit;"

changing it thus: —

Culpa potest demi, pœna perennis erit.
Epist. ex Ponto, i. 64.

[301] "Peccatorum juvenilium quondam conscium." — Guill. Malmesb., *De Pontif. Angl.*, lib. iv. p. 284. "Pedes suos vinculis ferreis astrinxit quæ clave poterant firmari ac reserari." — *Chron. Evesh.*, p. 6. The legend adds that the key of these fetters, which he had dropped into the Avon, a river of his own country, was found at Rome, in a salmon which had come up the Tiber. This miracle greatly contributed to the popular renown of St. Egwin among the English of the middle ages, who, like their descendants, were great salmon-fishers.

has supposed the locality of this vision to have been a place consecrated by Saxon superstition to the worship of the three Goddess Mothers, a worship which had struck deep root among the rural population of all the northern provinces of the Roman Empire, and which resisted the anathemas of the Councils longer than most other vestiges of idolatry.[302]

Egwin, when he was informed by the herdsman, went to pray humbly on the place of the vision. When his prayer was ended, he in turn saw the three virgins, one of whom, taller and infinitely more beautiful than the others, held, besides her book, a cross, with which she blessed him before she disappeared.[303] He recognized the Mother of the Saviour, and immediately resolved to build a monastery in her honor in that hitherto inaccessible spot. The new king of the country, godson and pupil of Egwin, seconded his master in this design, and gave him eighty four *manses* or pieces of ground in the neighborhood of the forest.

Consecration of the Monastery of Evesham.

On the very site of the great forge where the workmen had deafened Egwin with the noise of their hammers, and quite near the new monastery at Alcester, the Mercian parliament was convoked to give validity to the donations and privileges conferred on Egwin; and Wilfrid, as the great champion of the Benedictine rule in England, was appointed to preside at this solemnity, and to place on the altar he was about to consecrate the charter of endowment and freedom which had just been voted.[304] At the moment when he was about to accomplish,

[302] Roach Smith, *Illustrations of Roman London.* The same author relates that Wolstan, a monk of Winchester, at the end of the tenth century, in his poem on the Miracles of St. Swithin, has left a singular story of three nymphs or fairies who exercised their power in the forests of his neighborhood.

[303] "Surgenti ab oratione tres virgines . . . apparuere, quarum quæ media eminebat præcelsior omnique nitore splendentior, aliis præfulgebat, liliis candentior, rosis vernantior, odore inæstimabili fragrantior. . . . Quum cogitaret hanc Domini Genitricem esse." — *Chron. Evesh.*, p. 9.

[304] "Ex mandato apostolico fuit sapientium conventus in loco qui Alneceastra vocatur . . . et Brythwaldus archiepiscopus ex ore omnium et terram loci et libertatem in carta descripsit. Tunc elegerunt sapientes ut dominus Wilfridus episcopus et ego privilegium idem ad locum eumdem afferemus. Eadem autem die . . . Wilfridus episcopus et ego . . . cartam et loci libertatem . . . super altare posuimus, et sic coram omnibus locuti fuimus." — *Chronicon Abbatiæ de Evesham*, edid. W. D. Macray, 1863, p. 20. Cf. Pref. p. xviii. in the new collection of *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores.* It is needless to say that I do not quote the authority of the Rule of Pope Constantine in favor of Evesham, so cruelly turned into ridicule, together with so many other pretended Pontifical charters, by the formidable irony of Père Papebroch. (Bolland., vol. ii. April, pp. 30,

with his colleague Egwin, this solemn mission, in presence of all the people, he made the following prayer, which was immediately enrolled in the acts of the foundation: —

"Lord God, who dwellest in heaven, and who hast created all things, save him who shall give peace and security to this place, and shall confirm the inheritance of God in that liberty in which we offer it to Him. For this reason, in the name of Almighty God and of all heavenly virtue, we enjoin that neither king, nor prince, nor minister, nor any man of what rank soever, shall have the audacity to rob this holy place, or to appropriate any part of it whatever to his own profit; that this place may always remain as we will it, consecrated to the use of the flocks and shepherds of God, and under the sway of its own abbot, according to the rule of God and St. Benedict. But if — which God forbid! — any man, led astray by avarice, should contravene this institution, may he be judged before the tribunal of God, may he be forgotten by Christ, may his name be struck out of the book of life, and himself chained in the eternal pains of hell, unless at least in this life he does penance. As to him who shall respect and preserve this foundation, may God and all the saints have him in their holy keeping, and give joy to his soul in this life and happiness in the next."[305]

Egwin was buried in the monastery he had founded, the later annals of which are not without interest. Five hundred years afterwards it became one of the most venerated sanctuaries and most frequented places of pilgrimage in England,

31.) We may remark that the chronicler of Evesham has not dared to cite this bull at its proper date, that of the foundation, and only transcribes it in speaking of the suit decided by Pope Innocent III., Dec. 24, 1205, between the Bishop of Worcester and the Abbot of Evesham; the Pope, deceived by false documents, of which many were then fabricated, pronounced for the monastery. The monk Thomas of Marleberge, charged to plead the cause at Rome, and who has left us a very honest and animated narrative of the whole procedure, tells us that he fainted at the feet of the Pope when he heard the sentence read, partly from fatigue on account of the fast of the vigil of Christmas, partly for joy to feel that they were delivered from a *quasi-Egyptian* servitude.

[305] "Domine Deus . . . conserva illum qui locum istum pacificabit et conservabit et hanc Dei hereditatem et hanc libertatem confirmabit quam Deo obtulimus. Nos etiam præcipimus . . . ut neque rex, neque princeps, neque minister, nec ullius ordinis homo, id præsumat ut locum istum sanctum diminuat aut sibi in privatam potestatem aliquid vindicet, sed sit locus hic, ut nos optamus, gregibus et Dei pastoribus ejusdem loci in usum, et bene dispositus in potestate proprii abbatis secundum regulam Dei et beati Benedicti. Si autem aliquis (quod absit) avaritiæ spiritu arreptus vertere velit, judicetur ante tribunal Dei et nunquam in Christi veneat memoriam." *Chron. Evesh.*

the bleeding remains of Simon de Montfort, the great Earl of Leicester, slain in the great battle fought under its walls, having been carried thither. This proud aristocrat retains a just eminence in history as having completed the establishment of the most famous political assembly of modern times — the British House of Commons — by calling together the representatives of the cities and boroughs, and seating them beside the knights of the shires. Although a victorious enemy of the throne, and condemned by the Pope, he won to his side the popular and religious sentiment of the nation. During his life, and long after his death, he was the idol of the English people, who gave expression to their passionate attachment for the champion of their rights in a mode adapted to the spirit of the time, by going to pray at his tomb, attributing to him numerous miracles, and by comparing this new St. Simon to Simon Peter and Simon Maccabeus.[306]

Simon de Montfort buried at Evesham, 1265.

The consecration of this Church of Evesham, which was reserved for such memorable destinies, was the last episcopal function exercised by Wilfrid, the last act of that long life so entirely devoted to the extension of monastic life and the defence of the Roman Church. From the banks of the Avon he returned slowly to the neighborhood of Ely and Peterborough, which had long been dear and familiar to him. During this last journey it occurred to him, as to the most illustrious monk of our own day shortly before his death, to tell the story of his life to a younger friend and faithful companion, who might be his witness to posterity. It was to his inseparable follower Tatbert, as he rode by his side, that Wilfrid thus gave, not a general confession, but a detailed narrative of his long life, with the certainty of having reached the eve of its last day.[307] Death, indeed, arrested him on his journey, at Oundle, in one of his monastic foundations near Northampton, which he had dedicated to St. Andrew the Apostle, patron of that church at Rome, from whence the first English apostles had proceeded, and where he himself, the first of Anglo-Saxon

He narrates his life to his successor Tatbert.

[306] There are seven pages of these pretended miracles in the Chronicles of the Monks of Melrose. — Cf. LINGARD, *Hist. Eng.*, vol. ii. p. 166 of the Paris edition; and FREEMAN, *Gentleman's Magazine*, Sept., 1862. Evesham has preserved nothing of the splendor of its ancient abbey, except one beautiful tower of the fourteenth century.

[307] "Omnem vitæ sua conversationem memorialiter prius enarravit Tatberto, . . . quadam die equitantibus per viam, quasi præsciens obitum suum."

pilgrims, had prayed on his first arrival.[308] His last illness was short, and his death gentle and without pain. He had only time to remind his companions of his former instructions, and to designate as his successor at Hexham that Acca who stood by him in his trial at Rome and during his mortal illness at Meaux.

Death of Wilfrid. 23d June, 709

When he had given them a last blessing, his head fell back upon the pillow, and rested there in calm repose, without a single groan or sigh. The whole weeping community chanted prayers around his bed. As they reached Psalm CIII. and the verse *Emitte spiritum tuum et creabuntur*, his breathing ceased, and he yielded up his soul to his Creator.[309] The aged soldier of God died more gently than an infant in the cradle. He was seventy-six years of age, forty-four of which he had been a bishop.

His funeral was celebrated with a mingled pomp and grief which can readily be imagined. Tatbert, his disciple, confidant, and successor, was also his chief mourner. Before the burial, and in obedience to the last affectionate injunction of the dying, he sent the shirt of the saint, still moist with his last sweat, to an abbess named Cyndreda, who had been converted by Wilfrid, who now governed one of the monasteries of his congregation,[310] and who had, doubtless, like the Abbess of Coldingham and Whitby, distinguished herself by her fidelity to the exiled and persecuted pontiff. The body was carried to Ripon, and buried in the church which he had built and dedicated to St. Peter, the apostle whom, along with St. Andrew, he had most venerated.[311] Tatbert ordained that a special mass should be said for him; and that every year, on the day of his anniversary, the tithe of his flocks should be distributed to the poor, besides the daily

[308] See above, p. 309.

[309] "Cum quiete, non cum gemitu et murmure, caput ad cervical lectuli inclinavit et requievit."

[310] "Ad abbatissam sancti pontificis nostri, nomine Cynedryd."— EDDIUS, c. 62.

> "Interulamque puer sancti sudore madentem
> Corripuit, normatrici tulit atque beatæ
> Quam sibi flamineo sociaverat apte verendo
> Egregius heros, redimitim castificando."
>
> FRIDEGODUS, *Carmen de Sancto Wilfrido*, c. 55.

The holy Bishop Cuthbert, who died in 687, also sent his last garment to an abbess who had touched him by her pious devotion.

[311] EDDIUS, c. 61 and 64.

alms which were given also by Tatbert's orders, for the soul of his dear master and for his own.[312]

His worship and miracles.

As soon as he was dead, Wilfrid appeared to the eyes of all in his true light, as a great saint and a great man. The popular veneration, restrained or disturbed during his life by the struggles of race, party, and opinion in which he had been engaged, found expression beside his tomb. Miraculous cures on earth, luminous apparitions in the sky; a supernatural power which protected the cell where he died from profanation and from the ravages of fire — such were the first wonders which awoke the enthusiastic confidence of the Anglo-Saxons in this saint of their own race,[313] a confidence which, having once taken root, went on increasing, and shone out with redoubled intensity four centuries later under the first Norman Kings. It was not only the blind, the infirm, the dying, and the shipwrecked who found occasion to rejoice that they had invoked the powerful intercession of the sainted Abbot of Hexham with God, but also many innocent victims of persecution, many outraged virgins, and whole populations desolated by the ravages of war or by the oppression of foreign conquerors.[314]

At Hexham, in honor of the sanctuary which he had created,

[312] The beautiful epitaph which Bede has preserved to us, and of which he was probably the author, deserves to be quoted, at least in part: —

"Wilfridus hic magnus requiescit corpore præsul,
Hanc Domino qui aulam ductus pietatis amore
Fecit, et eximio sacravit nomine Petri,
Cui claves cœli Christus dedit arbiter orbis. . . .
Paschalis qui etiam sollemnia tempora cursus
Catholici ad justum correxit dogma canonis,
Quem statuere patres, dubioque errore remoto
Certa suæ genti ostendit moderamina ritus:
Inque locis istis monachorum examina crebra
Colligit, ac monitis cavit quæ regula patrum
Sedulus instituit: multisque domique, forisque
Jactatus nimium per tempora longa periclis,
Quindecies ternos postquam egit episcopus annos
Transiit, et gaudens celestia regna petivit.
Dona, Jesu, ut grex pastoris calle sequatur."

[313] Eddius, c. 62, 63.

[314] See the curious narrative of Abbot Ælred of Rievaulx, entitled *De Sanctis Ecclesiæ Hagulstadensis et eorum Miraculis*, ap. Mabillon, *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, vol. iii. pp. 204, 220, and Raine's *Priory of Hexham*. We may remark especially the incident of the young man unjustly condemned, who, at the moment of his execution, turned to the church of the saint, crying, "Adjuva nunc, Wilfride, quia si modo nolueris, paulo post non poteris." On which there arrived in hot haste two *fidejussores*, who gave security for him *more patrio*, and saved him. This story is cited by Palgrave as a proof of the utility of invoking saints and miracles against the iniquity of the law.

and for so long a time inhabited, the right of sanctuary was allowed to extend to a great circle round the monastery, the great enclosure — a sanctuary not only for ordinary criminals, but, especially in time of war, for the neighboring population, who took refuge there with their cattle, and whom the sword of the most cruel invaders dared not follow thither. The limits of this sanctuary were marked only by crosses erected at certain distances. The town which was soon after built close to the great monastery had no walls; the universal veneration for the memory of Wilfrid served it instead of ramparts. Nearly four centuries after his death, this veneration, and the confidence it inspired in the surrounding people, were expressed in a touching and truly poetic legend. King Malcolm of Scotland, in one of his numerous and cruel incursions into England, irritated by the murder of his messengers near Hexham, ordered the sack of the town and a general massacre of its inhabitants. The Galloway Picts, the most ferocious of all the Scotch, were charged with the execution of this atrocious order, which was but too much in accordance with the spirit of the time. The tears and supplications of the intended victims had been as vain as the entreaties of the clergy to move the king from his purpose. On the eve of the day fixed for the massacre, the whole population, disarmed and desperate, fled to the church of Wilfrid, which resounded with their cries. At this crisis one of the principal priests of the town fell asleep from fatigue, and had a dream, in which he saw two bishops arriving on horseback from the south. These Christian Dioscuri [315] came at a gallop to announce to the unfortunate inhabitants of Hexham that they were saved. "I am Wilfrid," said one, "and this is Cuthbert, whom I brought with me as I passed by Durham. We are come to deliver you. I have heard the weeping and cries of those who pray in my church. Fear nothing. At the dawn of day I will spread my net over the whole course of the Tyne, and no one shall be able to cross it to hurt you." Accordingly, in the morning a thick fog covered the whole valley. The messengers of the king lost their way, and when the fog dispersed the Tyne had risen so high that, there being no bridge, the Scots could not pass over. The husband of St. Margaret saw in this the finger

1060-1093.

He hastens with St. Cuthbert to the aid of his town of Hexham against the Scots.

[315] This recalls the apparition of Castor and Pollux at the battle of Lake Regillus.

of God, and gave up his cruel design, and the inhabitants of Hexham were more and more convinced that the arm of Wilfrid was ever ready to defend them.[315]

But it is specially at Ripon, where his relics reposed, that the universal faith manifested itself. Crowds came thither from all quarters, as if they expected still to find in bodily presence the aged saint who had feared neither man nor obstacles, and whose protection they invoked and even exacted with blind trust and tender familiarity, against the iniquities of conquest, the abuse of power, and the unjust severity of the law.[317]

His banner appears at the battle of the Standard. 1138.

Fifty years after the deliverance of Hexham, the Scotch, under their sainted King David, reappeared in Northumbria, and committed horrors rarely equalled even in the barbarous wars of the period.[318] The alarmed population took arms under the leadership of the Archbishop of York, and of those Anglo-Norman barons who were most celebrated for the munificence they displayed in the monastic restorations of the twelfth century — the Bruces, Mowbrays, Percies, and Estoutevilles. They marched against the cruel invaders, and met them at some distance to the north of Ripon. The English were drawn up round a cart similar to that famous *carroccio* which the Lombards of the same period led into battle against the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa: on this humble pedestal, above a pyx containing the host, they had planted the banner of Wilfrid — *Wilfridi Ripensis vexillum* — between those of St. Peter and St. John. This cart, which they called the

[316] "Rex vocat Gallowenses homines cæteris crudeliores. . . . 'Mox ut dies illuxerit, transeuntes flumen, irruite in eos. Non parcat oculus vester non ordini, non sexui, non ætati.' . . . Clamor ingens, ploratus et ululatus. . . . Et ecce apparuerunt duo viri . . . sedentes in equis. . . . Wilfridus vocor, et ecce hic mecum est sanctus Cuthbertus, quem transiens per Dunelmum adduxi. . . . Ecce, albescente aurora, extendam rete meum." — ÆLRED RIEVALLENSIS, *De SS. Ecclesie Hagulstad.*, c. 2, ed. Surtees. Cf. Pref., p. lx. Wilfrid is said to have come from Ripon, where his tomb was, and to have gone towards the north, passing by Durham, which is south of Hexham.

[317] "Ita ad eum in hac ecclesia quasi ad viventem confugerent, in omnibus necessitatibus quasi præsentem consulerent, in tribulationibus et angustiis ejus auxilium non tam peterent quam exigerent."

[318] See the contemporary historians quoted by Lingard, and above all the discourse of a bishop before the battle, omitted in the edition given by Twysden of the special account by Ælred, Abbot of Rievaulx, *De Bello Standardi*, but restored, after the manuscripts, by Raine, in *Priory of Hexham*, vol. i. p. 89.

Standard,[319] gave its name to the battle, in which the King of Scotland and his ferocious army were completely routed. After the victory, they brought back to Ripon in triumph the banner of the saint, who had thus protected and saved his former diocese. The banner often reappeared at the head of battalions armed for the defence of the country.[320]

Of this enduring and touching popularity there now remains nothing but a shadow, a name, a meaningless word. In the modern town of Ripon, which has grown out of the great monastery founded by Wilfrid, the people have retained the habit of calling a certain Sunday in the year *Wilfrid's Sunday;*[321] but when they are asked why, it becomes plain that they know nothing either of the saint to whom they owe their municipal existence, nor of the Church whose apostle and champion he was.

What the work of Wilfrid was.

Happily for us, his work and his glory are inscribed in ineffaceable characters in the history of that Church, as well as of his country. His work was as varied as it was successful and lasting. Let us first remark its importance in respect to the monastic order. No one has done more for the extension and consolidation of that order in England, in the first place, by the introduction of the Benedictine rule, then established only at Canterbury; and afterwards by charters and exemptions obtained from Rome, and from the Saxon kings and parliaments, in behalf of the great foundations of his time, such as Hexham and Peterborough; but above all, by the strongly woven links of intimate and active association between the numerous monasteries who regarded him as their head — a connection which gave them mutual security against the violence and usurpation of the princes and powers around them.[322]

Services rendered to the monastic order.

In the year which followed his death, the first anniversary

[319] "Dicitur a stando Standardum, quod stetit illic militiæ probitas vincere sive mori."

[320] Ricardi Hagulstadensis, *De Gestis Regis Stephani et de Bello Standardi*, ed. Surtees, pp. 91, 93.

[321] Faber, p. 204. There are no remains of Wilfrid's church, unless it be the crypt of the present cathedral, which is attributed to that period. In the time of Leland, a little before the Reformation, there were only three crosses, *antiquissimi operis*, on the site of the ancient monastery. One of the three spires of the church, rebuilt in the fourteenth century, bore the name of St. Wilfrid. It was blown down by the wind in 1660.

[322] "In ipsis exiliis non otio deditus, sed cœnobiis et episcopatibus fundandis industrius. . . . Reliquit cœnobia quot nullus, quæ solus aggregaverat, multis dividens hæredibus." — Will. Malmesb., f. 153.

of his funeral brought together at Ripon all the abbots of the numberless monasteries which he had either founded, adopted, or received among his own communities. They came from the four corners of England, disturbed and anxious as to the situation in which the death of their venerable chief had placed them. "While he lived," they said, "we often had to suffer the violence of kings and nobles; but by his holiness, his wisdom, and the great number of his friends, he was always able to deliver us. We must now believe that he will be our protector in heaven, as are St. Peter and St. Andrew, whom he loved so much, and to whom he dedicated all his possessions, and all his followers." On the evening of this anniversary, after supper, during the twilight of the long summer day, all the abbots, followed by the whole community of Ripon, went out to sing complines in the open air. There they saw the whole heaven lighted up by a great rainbow, the pale radiance of which proceeded from the tomb of the saint, and wrapt the whole enclosure of the monastery in light. Eddi, the faithful biographer of Wilfrid, was there, and saw with wonder this luminous circle. "We all understood," he says, "that the intercession of the saint was to be, by the goodness of God, an impregnable rampart round the vine of the Lord and His family; and the event has proved it, for since that time we have lived in safety, under abbots freely chosen by ourselves, and when some have been threatened, others have come to their help, and that throughout all England, north as well as south of the Humber."[323]

Our musician thus indicates, as it seems, that Wilfrid had succeeded in making, at least for a time, a first attempt at that association of different monasteries among themselves which many great monastic saints had dreamed of as the completion of the rule of St. Benedict, and which is realized on so vast a scale in the orders of Cluny and Cîteaux.

Services rendered to the English Church;

To the Church of England Wilfrid did the immense service of securing the permanence of the episcopate. Proceeding in opposition to him, and by uncanonical methods, to partition the primitive bishoprics, Archbishop Theodore, his rival and enemy, established

[323] "Undique abbates ejus cum subjectis suis . . . ab oriente et occidente, ab aquilone et austro. . . . Quamdiu vixit optimum caput vitæ nostræ, frequenter a regibus et principibus tentationes sustinuimus, quibus . . . finem venerabilem semper imponere consuevit. . . . In crepusculo vespertino . . . candidum circulum totum cœnobium circumdans quasi per diem arcus cœii absque variis caloribus. . . . Nos vero adorantes laudavimus Dominum."—Eddius, c. 64.

a new diocesan division, better adapted to the wants of the country. In addition to this, the same pontiff appointed the election of bishops to be conducted by popular assemblies presided over by the primate, at which deputies from the vacant church might be heard, and where the nominations of the king were discussed and controlled by the bishops and nobles; so that it might be truly said that, in principle, the choice of the bishops, as well as of the abbots, depended on the clergy.[324] But the power of the episcopate became rapidly so great, and its dignity so much sought after, that the elections were soon interfered with in an injurious and oppressive manner by the throne. Wilfrid opposed a far more efficacious barrier to this lay influence by resisting to the utmost the claim made by the kings to nominate, depose, or remove bishops at their pleasure, and by consecrating the principle of permanence and immovability in the episcopate as much by the support of the Holy See as by the national synods. Thanks to him, until the Norman Conquest, four centuries later, no English king dared arbitrarily depose a bishop from his see.

To the Church universal;

To the whole Catholic Church he rendered the important service of fighting, overcoming, and destroying the exclusive spirit of Celtic Christianity. Without being in any way a revolt or protest against Catholic unity, without deserving at all that imputation of heresy or schism of which Wilfrid and his followers were too prodigal, this spirit might readily have degenerated into a sort of narrow and jealous provincialism. After having long repulsed the idea of communicating the benefits of the faith to the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of Britain, the Celtic Church reconsidered the matter, and the ice having been once broken by Roman missionaries, she took measures to supplant and eclipse them everywhere. But the Celtic apostles of England, no doubt without knowing it, by a series of pedantic details, isolated their new converts from the Church of Rome, the centre of Christian action, precisely at the moment when that Church, called by Providence to evangelize the immense family of Teutonic tribes beyond the Rhine and Danube, had the most imperative need of help from that Teutonic race whose mission St. Gregory the Great had prophetically pointed out, and whom God had made the most

[324] "Electio olim præsulum et abbatum tempore Anglorum pene clericos et monachos erat." — Guill. Malmesb., *De Gestis Pontif.*, c. 3, f. 157. Cf Lingard, *Antiquities*, pp. 91–96, 145.

active, the hardiest, and the most persevering of all barbarous races. England was about to become a mere ecclesiastical branch of Ireland, and her character in that case would have become doubly insular, to the detriment of Catholic unity and the common interest of the Christian world. Wilfrid appeared: by a fifty years' struggle, and at the cost of his peace, his safety, and even his personal freedom, he first neutralized, and finally annihilated, the Celtic spirit, without at any time being guilty of persecution, coercion, or violence towards the vanquished. He did more than check the Celtic movement; he sent it back into chaos; he extirpated all the ritual and liturgic differences which served as a veil and pretext for the prejudices of race and opinion; he extirpated them, not only in his immense diocese, the vast region of Northumbria,[325] but throughout all England; and not in England only, but, by the contagion of his example and his influence, in Ireland, in Scotland, and finally in the very sanctuary of Celtic Christianity, at Iona.[325]

To England.

Last of all, by himself converting the last of the conquering tribes which still remained pagan, that of the South Saxons, Wilfrid gloriously ended the conversion of England, which had been begun nearly a century before by missionaries from Rome. He did yet more. By his own pilgrimage, the first of his race to knock at the door of the Vatican, and to pray at the tomb of the Apostles — by thus

[325] A few faint vestiges of Celtic traditions and institutions are all that can be found in Northumbria at a later period. For instance, in 936, King Athelstane, as he marched against the Scots, solicited the prayers of the Culdees, *Colidei*, who served the Cathedral of St. Peter: "Videns in dicta ecclesia viros sanctæ vitæ et conversationis honestæ dictos ad tunc *Colideos*, qui multos sustentabant pauperes, et modicum habebant unde viverent, concessit . . . ut melius possent sustinere pauperes confluentes, hospitalitatem tenere." This evidently refers to the Celtic *Celi-Dé*; and their existence at York in the tenth century must have dated back from the institutions of the Irish missionaries anterior to Wilfrid. It is apparent also, that according to the universal custom of Celtic as well as Benedictine monks, they combined the celebration of divine service with the care of the poor. Athelstane granted them, after his victory, "unam travam bladi de qualibet caruca arante in episcopatu York, quæ usque in præsentem diem dicitur Petercorn." These *travæ* had been given up to the king on the condition of his exterminating the wolves which destroyed "fere omnes villanorum bestias." The wolves killed, the rents remained available, and the king bestowed them on the *Colidei*. This gift, *largitione fidelium*, was confirmed by William the Conqueror and William Rufus, who transferred them and their rents to a hospital founded by the same *Colidei* at York under the name of St. Leonard. — Dugdale, *Monasticon*, quoted by Reeves, *The Culdees of the British Isles*, pp. 59–144.

[326] It will be seen further on how Adhelm, Egbert, and Adamnan finished Wilfrid's work.

instituting pilgrimages and appeals to Rome — by obliging Saxon kings and bishops to acknowledge, in law and in fact, the intervention and supremacy of the Papacy, — he brought England into the orbit of that great movement of European civilization of which the Holy See became gradually the pivot and the centre. It was he who completed and crowned the work of Gregory and Augustin. He placed the seal on the conquest of England by popes and monks. England owed it to him that she was not only Christian, but Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman. No other Anglo-Saxon exercised a more decisive and more sovereign influence on the destinies of his race.

Character of Wilfrid.

In modern England, all that Wilfrid did is destroyed, all that he loved has perished. He no longer lives except in history, where he has left, for every attentive observer, an ineffaceable trace. By placing him upon her altars, the Church teaches us that by his devotion to justice, truth, and the good of souls, he has gained an eminent position among the saints. But in a purely historical point of view, his character and his career offer a study equally curious and interesting. We find in him no analogy with the great monks of the primitive Church, the solitaries of the Thebaïd, nor even with the solemn and mystic ascetics of Celtic Christianity. Though he was not insensible to the consolations and aspirations of spiritual life, the predominating features in his character are not those of an exclusively spiritual being, of a man of prayer and solitude; they are rather those of the man of action and movement, the soldier of religious life.

In Wilfrid begins that great line of prelates, by turns apostolic and political, eloquent and warlike, brave champions of Roman unity and ecclesiastical independence, magnanimous representatives of the rights of conscience, the liberties of the soul, the spiritual powers of man and the laws of God; a line to which history presents no equal out of the Catholic Church of England; a lineage of saints, heroes, confessors, and martyrs, which produced St. Dunstan, St. Lanfranc, St. Anselm, St. Thomas à Becket, Stephen Langton, St. Edmund, the exile of Pontigny, and which ended in Reginald Pole. By a strange and touching coincidence, it is beside the tomb of this last Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, in the cathedral, sprinkled with the blood of St. Thomas the Martyr, that the relics of Wilfrid now rest, having been

transferred to the church of the primacy in 959 to save them from the sacrilegious rapacity of the Danes.[327]

In addition to all this, Wilfrid was the precursor of the great prelates, the great monks, the princely abbots of the middle ages, the heads and oracles of national councils, the ministers and lieutenants, and often the equals and rivals of kings. When duty called, no suffering alarmed, no privation deterred, and no danger stopped his course; four times in his life he made the journey to Rome, then ten times more laborious and a hundred times more dangerous than the voyage to Australia is now. But, left to himself, he loved pomp, luxury, magnificence, and power. He could be humble and mild when it was necessary; but it was more congenial to him to confront kings, princes, nobles, bishops, councils, and lay assemblies, in harsh and inflexible defence of his patrimony, his power, his authority, and his cause.

He was never without adversaries, and as it has been justly remarked, he seems to have foreseen and practised that axiom of Rancé, which says, "A Christian should spend his money in buying enemies." But many of his enemies were saints; and of all the holy bishops and abbots of his time, so numerous in the Anglo-Saxon Church, not one was his ally, not one held out to him a friendly hand in his trials and combats. Many even showed a sort of inexplicable animosity against him. It must be concluded that he did not sufficiently consider the susceptibility of national sentiment, which was always so powerful among his countrymen, and which finally detached them from Catholicism. And in addition, while making the greatest possible allowance for provincial rancor and personal jealousy, it must be admitted that there was in him an unjust contempt for former generous services, a certain sickly irritability, a tiresome pertinacity in dispute, and a haughty and injurious violence of language;[328] but of language alone, for in his acts he was always tolerant and generous.

On the other hand, he had many friends. The monks who came spontaneously to range themselves under his crosier were counted by thousands; among them he found bold and faithful companions in all his travels, shipwrecks, dangers, and exiles: and these life-long followers were the same who prayed by his bedside with so many tears that his life might

[327] Faber, p. 202.

[328] This is admitted by the most enthusiastic of his modern biographers, Father Faber, p. 203. Compare Hook, p. 138.

be spared. He inspired the most illustrious and most holy women of his race, Queen Etheldreda, the Abbess Ebba, and Elfleda, his last protectress, with an affection which vanquished all obstacles. He exercised over them, and over the most delicate and generous souls of his time, as well as over the savage Frisians and the dauntless Lombards, an irresistible influence; and this power lasted all his life from the time when, arriving at the Northumbrian court in the light armor of a boy, he gained the heart of Queen Eanfleda, until the last crisis, when the heroic Bertfrid, saviour of the Bernician dynasty, declared himself in favor of the aged exile.

This influence is explained by the rare qualities which more than redeemed all his faults. His was, before all else, a great soul, manly and resolute, ardent and enthusiastic, full of unconquerable energy, able to wait or to act, but incapable of discouragement or fear, born to live upon those heights which attract at once the thunderbolt and the eyes of the crowd. His eloquence, superior to anything yet known in England, his keen and penetrating intelligence, his eager zeal for literary studies and public education, his knowledge and love of those wonders of architecture which dazzled the Christian nation, and to which his voice attracted such crowds; his constancy in trial, his ardent love of justice, — all contributed to make of him one of those personages who sway and move the spirits of their contemporaries, and who master the attention and imagination even of those whom they cannot convince.[329] Something generous, ardent, and magnanimous in his nature commended him always to the sympathy of lofty hearts; and when adverse fortune and triumphant violence and ingratitude came in, to put upon his life the seal of adversity nobly and piously borne, the rising tide of emotion and sympathy carried all before it, sweeping away all traces of those errors of conduct which might have seemed to us less attractive or comprehensible.

He was the first Anglo-Saxon who secured the attention of other nations, and the first of whom a special biography

[329] "Vir pro justitiæ merito multis jactatus periculis . . . egregie factus ad promerendam gratiam principum apud quos exularet, idemque pro rigore justitiæ compatriotis regibus odiosus." — Will. Malmesb., f. 153. Eddi, who, like all the learned monks of his time, knew his Horace by heart, does not fail, like a parliamentary orator of the nineteenth century, to apply to his hero, in the preface of his biography, the well-known lines —

"Feriuntque summos
Fulgura montes."

Odes, ii. 2.

has been preserved. In each detail, as well as in the general impression made by this biography, he appears to us a type of the qualities and singularities of his nation; of their obstinacy, courage, laborious and untiring energy, their dogged love of work and of conflict, their resolution to strive till death for their patrimony, honor, and rights. *Dieu et mon droit!* This proud English motto is written on every page of the life of Wilfrid. In the service of a cause which now, by the misfortune of the ages and the blindness of men, has become the most unpopular of all causes in the eyes of the English nation, Wilfrid displayed all the virtues which are most characteristic of his countrymen, and most fitted to attract them. All the passions and all the noble instincts of his people palpitated in him. That mind must indeed be besotted by hatred, a thousand times blinder than ignorance itself, which does not recognize in him the eldest son of an invincible race, the first of the English nation.

BOOK XIII.

CONTEMPORARIES AND SUCCESSORS OF ST. WILFRID, 650–735.

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day."—1 THESSAL., v. 5.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—2 TIM. i. 7.

CHAPTER I.

ST. CUTHBERT. — 637–687.

Contrast between Wilfrid and the saints of the Northumbrian coast. — His glory eclipsed by that of Cuthbert. — Childhood of Cuthbert, a shepherd on the Scottish borders. — He becomes a novice at Melrose. — He evangelizes the Scottish marches. (Note upon the Monastery of Dull, cradle of the University of St. Andrews.) — His austerities: his baths: legend of the otters. — He goes from Melrose to Ripon, from which he is expelled by Wilfrid, along with all the Celtic monks. — He becomes prior at Lindisfarne, where he establishes the customs of Rome and the Benedictine rule. — His life at Lindisfarne in its cloistral and in its external aspect. — His extreme modesty. — He becomes a hermit in a cave of the Isle of Farne. — Popular traditions concerning this portion of his life.—The birds of St. Cuthbert, and the beads of his chaplet. — His charity towards the crowd of penitents who sought him there. — His hospitality. — His humility. — King Egfrid takes him from his rock to make him Bishop of Lindisfarne. — He continues both monk and missionary during his short episcopate. — His compassion for the sufferings of his penitents. — The mad countess. — The mother consoled. — His affection for his foster-mother, for Queen Etheldreda, and the great abbesses Ebba of Coldingham and Elfleda of Whitby. (Note upon the exclusion of women from his monastery.) — His last visit to the Abbess Verca. — He returns to his rock to die. — The abbess's shroud. — Last exhortations of Cuthbert: his death. — His closest friend dies at the same hour on the same day. — Their annual interview upon the rock of Farne. — Great and lasting popularity of his memory. — Translation of his relics to Durham. — Magnificence and wealth of that cathedral, after Toledo the richest in the world. — Right of asylum. —

Efficacy of his protection to the oppressed. — Alfred, Canute, and William the Conqueror. — The independence, almost sovereign, of Cuthbert's successors under the Anglo-Norman monarchy. — He is invoked by the English against the Scottish invasions. — Battle of Neville's Cross. — His banner appears for the last time in the insurrection of the North against Henry VIII. — It is profaned and burned with his body. — His popularity at sea. — The sailor-monks. — Cuthbert, while a child, saw them like sea-birds on the waves. — His appearance to sailors in danger. — The hermit Ethelwold prays for the shipwrecked. — Grace Darling, the Christian heroine of these islands in the nineteenth century.

BESIDE the great figure of Wilfrid there appears in history an entire family of monastic saints, his contemporaries and countrymen, who should have found a place in the narrative we have just concluded, had it not been already too much prolonged. But although they were all inhabitants of Northumbria during the rule of Wilfrid, they form naturally into a group apart. This separation is due partly to the reserve, sometimes approaching enmity, which they manifested towards him, and still more to the essentially peaceful nature of their character and position. If in some cases they are found in contact with the struggles and agitations of their age and country, it is evidently against their inclinations. Their desire for peace, and ascetic and studious retirement, was as great as that of Wilfrid for the fatigues and hazards of the fight; and their history and aspect, retired as they were in their monasteries upon the coast of the Northumbrian kingdom, where the conflict between Wilfrid and the descendants of the Man of Fire was continually breaking out with fresh force, afford a pleasant and refreshing contrast to the stormy career of the great abbot.

Contrast between Wilfrid and the saints of the Northumbrian coast.

In the first rank of these peaceful men stands the monk honored by the Church under the name of St. Cuthbert,[1] and whose glory soon eclipsed that of St. Wilfrid, though the place he holds in history is of much inferior importance. Yes, great as was the influence of Wilfrid — a great bishop, a great abbot, the offspring of a noble race — his popularity was surpassed among his contempora-

His glory eclipsed by that of St. Cuthbert.

[1] His Life was first written by a monk of Lindisfarne during the reign of King Aldfrid — that is, before 705, less than twenty years after the death of the saint — and afterwards, both in verse and prose, by Bede, who had attained the age of fourteen when Cuthbert died, and who takes care to state, with his usual exactness, the names and profession of all who supplied him with materials.

ries as well as with Catholic posterity by that of a shepherd boy, who also became a bishop, and whose diocese was one of those produced by the division of that of Wilfrid. The Celts have claimed Cuthbert as belonging to them, at least by birth.[2] They make him out to have been the son of an Irish princess, reduced to slavery, like Bridget the holy patroness of Ireland, but who fell, more miserably, victim to the lust of her savage master. They have also given him a place among the disciples of their great sanctuary in Iona.[3] His Celtic origin would seem to be still more conclusively proved by his attitude towards Wilfrid than by the constant tradition of the Anglo-Saxon monks of Durham. But, to tell the truth, nothing is certainly known either of his place of birth or the rank of his family.

Youth of Cuthbert.

His first appearance in history is as a shepherd in Lauderdale, a valley watered by a river which flows into the Tweed near Melrose, upon the borders, as now defined, of England and Scotland. It was then a district annexed to the kingdom of Northumbria, which had just been delivered by the holy King Oswald from the yoke of the Mercians and Britons. As he is soon afterwards to be seen travelling on horseback, lance in hand and accompanied by a squire, it is not to be supposed that he was of poor extraction. At the same time it was not the flocks of his father which he kept, as did David in the plains of Bethlehem; it is expressly noted that the flocks confided to his care belonged to a master, or to several mas-

A shepherd on the Scottish borders.

[2] The Irish origin of Cuthbert is undoubtingly asserted by Reeves, in his *Notes on Wattenbach*, p. 5. Lanigan (vol. iii. p. 88) states that Usher, Ware, and Colgan entertained the same opinion. There exists a Life of Cuthbert, translated from Irish into Latin, which was partly published, first in the collection of Capgrave, and afterwards reprinted by the Surtees Society in 1838, from a MS. much more full, but dating only from the fourteenth century. In this Life, his mother is said to have been a daughter of the King of Leinster, whom the King of Connaught outraged and kept as his slave, after having slain all her family. Her child, whom she sent into Britain, was named *Nullhoc* — that is to say, *wailing* — because of the tears of his outraged mother. (Colgan, *Act. SS.*, ad 20 Mart.) Many other ancient authors, both Irish and English, pronounce him an Irishman. Bede makes no reference to his birthplace. The Bollandists, who reckon him among the Anglo-Saxons in the article devoted to him on the date of the 20th March, seem to count him as Irish in their Life of St. Wiro, on the 8th May. Mabillon supposes him to have been born where he kept his sheep, on the banks of the Leader, but without giving any proof. Lanigan evidently inclines to the same opinion.

[3] "Una cum matre puer ad insulam, quæ Hy dicitur, prafectus est: ubi aliquandiu cum religiosis viris loci illius conversatus est." — *Libellus de Ortu S. Cuthberti*, ed. Surtees, p. 79.

ters. His family must have been in the rank of those clients or vassals to whom the great Saxon lords gave the care and superintendence of their flocks upon the vast extent of pastures which, under the name of *folc-land* or commons, was left to their use, and where the cowherds and shepherds lived day and night in the open air, as is still done by the shepherds of Hungary in the *pustas* on both sides of the Danube.[4]

Popular imagination in the north of England, of which Cuthbert was the hero before as well as after the Norman Conquest, had thus full scope in respect to the obscure childhood of its favorite saint, and delighted in weaving stories of his childish sports, representing him as walking on his hands, and turning somersaults with his little companions.[5] A more authentic testimony, that of his contemporary Bede, informs us that our shepherd boy had not his equal among the children of his age for activity, dexterity, and boldness in the race and fight. In all sports and athletic exercises he was the first to challenge his companions, with the certainty of being the victor. The description reads like that of a little Anglo-Saxon of our own day — a scholar of Eton or Harrow.[6] At the same time a precocious piety showed itself in him, even amid this exuberance of youth. One night, as he said his prayers, while keeping the sheep of his masters, he saw the sky, which had been very dark, broken by a track of light, upon which a crowd of angels descended from heaven, returning afterwards with a resplendent soul which they had gone to meet on earth.[7] Next morning he heard that Aïdan, the holy Bishop of Lindisfarne, the apostle of the district, had died during the night. This vision determined his monastic vocation.

[4] "Ac statim commendans suis pecora quæ pascebat dominis." — BEDE, *De Vita et Miraculis S. Cuthberti*, c. 54. Cf. KEMBLE, *Saxons in England*.

[5] "Cum jocantibus satis jucundus apparuit. Quidam saltu, alii luctamine . . . nonnulli vertice capitis in terram depresso, pede utroque in sublime porrecto, se subrigere decertabant." — *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[6] "Omnes cœtaneos in agilitate et petulantia superans." — MONACH. LINDISFARN., ap. BOLLAND., t. iii. Martii, p. 118. "Agilis natura . . . acutus ingenio . . . fessis nonnunquam aliis, ille indefessus, si quis ultra secum vellet certare, quasi victor lætabundus inquireret. Sive enim saltu, sive cursu, sive luctatu, sive quolibet alio membrorum sinuamine . . . ille omnes æquævos et nonnullos etiam majores a se gloriabatur esse superatos." — BEDE, *De Vita et Miraculis S. Cuthberti*, c. 1. Cf. c. 6.

[7] "Vidit subito fusum de cœlo lumen medias largæ noctis interrupisse tenebras. In quo cœlestium choros agminum terram petisse." — BEDE, c. 4.

He becomes a novice at Melrose.

Some time afterwards we find him at the gates of the Monastery of Melrose, the great Celtic establishment for novices in Northumbria. He was then only fifteen, yet nevertheless he arrived, like Wilfrid at the court of Queen Eanfleda, on horseback, lance in hand, attended by a squire; for he had already begun his career in the battle-field, and learned in the face of the enemy the first lessons of abstinence, which he now meant to practise in the cloister.[8] He was received by two great doctors of the Celtic Church — the abbot Eata, one of the twelve Northumbrians first chosen by Aïdan, and the prior Boswell, who conceived a special affection for the new-comer, and undertook the charge of his monastic education. Five centuries later, the copy of the Gospels in which the master and pupil had read daily was still kissed with veneration in the Cathedral of Durham.

The robust and energetic youth very soon showed the rarest aptitude for monastic life, not only for cenobitical exercises, but, above all, for the missionary work, which was the principal occupation of monks in that country and period. He was not content merely to surpass all the other monks in his devotion to the four principal occupations of monastic life — study, prayer, vigils, and manual labor[9] — but specially applied himself to the work of casting out from the hearts of the surrounding population the last vestiges of pagan superstition. Not a village was so distant, not a mountain-side so steep, not a cottage so poor, that it escaped his zeal. He sometimes passed weeks and even months out of his monastery, preaching to and confessing the rustic population of these mountains.[10]

His missionary life.

The roads were very bad, or rather there were no roads; only now and then was it possible to travel on horseback; sometimes, when his course lay along the coast of the districts inhabited by the Picts, he would take the help of a boat.[11] But generally it was on foot

[8] "In castris contra hostem cum exercitu sedens, ibique habens stipendia parva." — Bolland., p. 118. "Cum equo desilisset et hastam quam tenuerat manu ministro dedisset." — Bede, c. 6.

[9] "Legendi videlicet, orandi, vigilandi, atque operandi soiertior." — Bede, *Vita S. Cuthb.*, c. 6.

[10] "Solebat ea maxime loca peragrare, illis prædicare in viculis, qui in arduis asperisque montibus procul positi, aliis horrori erant ad visendum, et paupertate pariter ac rusticitate sua, doctorum prohibebant accessum. . . . In montanis plebem rusticam." — Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 9.

[11] "Cum duobus fratribus pergens et navigans ad terram Pictorum, ubi Mudpieralegis (?) prospere pervenerunt." — Boll., p. 119. "Ad terram Pictorum qui Nidwari vocantur." — Bede, c. 11. The late Mr. Joseph

that he had to penetrate into the glens and distant valleys, crossing the heaths and vast table-lands uncultivated and uninhabited, where a few shepherds' huts, like that in which he himself had passed his childhood, and which were in winter abandoned even by the rude inhabitants, were thinly scattered. But neither the intemperance of the seasons, nor hunger, nor thirst, arrested the young and valiant missionary in his apostolic travels, to seek the scattered population, half Celts and half Anglo-Saxons, who, though already Christian in name and by baptism, retained an obstinate attachment to many of their ancient superstitions, and who were quickly led back by any great calamity, such as one of the great pestilences which were then so frequent, to use of magic, amulets, and other practices of idolatry.[12]

He evangelizes the country between the Solway and the Forth.

The details which have been preserved of the wonders which often accompanied his wanderings show that his labors extended over all the hilly district between the two seas — from the Solway to the Forth.[13] They explain to us how the monks administered the consolations and the teachings of religion, before the organization of parishes, ordained by Archbishop Theodore, had been everywhere introduced or regulated. As soon as the arrival of one of these apostolic missionaries in a somewhat central locality was known, all the population of the neighborhood hastened to hear him, endeavoring with fervor and simplicity to put in practice the instruction they received from him. Cuthbert especially was received among them with affectionate confidence: his eloquence was so persuasive that it brought the most rebellious to his feet to

Robertson, one of the greatest antiquarians in Scotland, who kindly exerted himself to enlighten me upon the principal difficulties of the history of Cuthbert, supposed this place to be Newburn, near Largo, in the county of Fife.

[12] "Ecce, inquit, in itinere quo vadis, nullum viculum, nulla hominum habitacula reperies. . . . Tuguria pastorum quæ, æstate infirmiter posita, tunc jam deserta patebant. . . . Aliquoties equo sedere at sæpius pedes. . . . Ad erronea idololatriæ medicamina currebant . . . per incantationes vel alligaturas vetata quælibet dæmoniacæ artis arcana." — *Vita*, c. 5, 9. BOLLAND., pp. 119, 120.

[13] It would even appear that the sphere of his operations extended much farther north, for the *Libellus de Ortu S. Cuthberti*, written in the Irish tongue, a Latin version of which has been published by the Surtees Society, mentions a stone cross raised by him when he left the Monastery of Dull, in the district of Athole, close to Taymouth. This monastery, which is celebrated in the annals of the Celtic Church, was the cradle of the University of St. Andrews. In the eleventh century it had for Coarb or Combarba — that is, for lay and hereditary abbot — the ancestor of the royal house of the Stuarts.

hear their sins revealed to them, and to accept the penance which he imposed upon them.[14]

His austerities.

Cuthbert prepared himself for preaching and the administration of the sacraments by extraordinary penances and austerities. Stone bathing-places, in which he passed the entire night in prayer, lying in the frozen water, according to a custom common among the Celtic saints, and which Wilfrid himself, as has been seen, had borrowed from them, are still shown in several different places.[15] When he was near the sea, he went to the shore, unknown to any one, at night, and, plunging into the waves up to his neck, sang his vigils there. As soon as he came out of the water he resumed his prayers on the sand of the beach. On one occasion one of his disciples, who had followed him secretly in order to discover the aim of this nocturnal expedition, saw two otters come out of the water, which, while the saint prayed on his knees, licked his frozen feet and wiped them with their hair until life and warmth returned to the benumbed members.[16] By one of those strange caprices of human frivolity which disconcert the historian, this insignificant incident is the only recollection which now remains in the memory of the people. St. Cuthbert is known to the peasant of Northumberland and of the Scottish borders only by the legend of those compassionate otters, even as the name of Columba recalls to the mariners of the Hebrides only the history of the tired crane, which he sent back to Ireland, its native country.

The legend of the otters.

He is sent from Melrose to Ripon. 660.

He had been for some years at Melrose, when the Abbot Eata took him along with him to join the community of Celtic monks established by King Alchfrid at Ripon. Cuthbert held the office of steward: and in this office showed the same zeal as in his missions.

[14] "Erat quippe moris eo tempore populis Anglorum, ut veniente in villam clerico vel presbytero, cuncti ad ejus imperium verbum audituri confluebant. . . . Cudbercto tanta erat dicendi peritia, tantus amor persuadendi." — *Vita*, c. 9.

[15] "Vas quoddam balnearium de lapide integro sibi fabricavit . . . quod vas adhuc in montis vertice permanet." — *Libellus*, c. 25. See above, p. 272, the history of Drychthelme, the penitent of Melrose, and for Wilfrid, p. 360.

[16] "Homo Dei obstinata mente . . . in mediis fluctibus et mari aliquando usque ad ascellas tumultuante et fluctuante tinctus est. . . . Venere continuo de profundo maris quadrupedæ quæ vulgo lutræ vocantur. . . . Hæ . . . anhelitu suo pedes ejus fovere cœperunt . . . lambentes pedes, volutantes tergebant pellibus suis, et calefacientes odoribus suis." — Boll., p. 119. Bede, c. 40.

When travellers arrived through the snow, famished and nearly fainting with cold, he himself washed their feet and warmed them against his bosom,[17] then hastened to the oven to order bread to be made ready if there was not enough. It may be perhaps remembered that the sons of Melrose had to give place to Wilfrid, when he, at the commencement of his campaign in favor of the Roman ritual and paschal unity, attempted to compel the Celtic colony of Ripon to give up their national customs.[18] It was a great and sudden storm, said Bede, with the prudent reserve which he observes in all that relates to the struggle between Wilfrid and other saints. Cuthbert returned with his countrymen to Melrose, resumed his life of missionary preaching, and again met his friend and master, the prior Boswell, at whose death in the great pestilence of 664,[19] Cuthbert was elected abbot in his place. He had been himself attacked by the disease; and all the monks prayed earnestly that his life might be preserved to them. When he knew that the community had spent the night in prayer for him, though he felt no better, he cried to himself, with a double impulse of his habitual energy, "What am I doing in bed? It is impossible that God should shut His ears to such men. Give me my staff and my shoes." And getting up, he immediately began to walk, leaning upon his staff. But this sudden cure left him subject to weakness which shortened his life.[20]

He is transferred to Lindisfarne.

However, he had not long to remain at Melrose.[21] The triumph of Wilfrid and the Roman ritual at the Conference of Whitby brought about a revolution in the monastic metropolis of Northumbria, and in the mother monastery of Melrose at Lindisfarne. Bishop Colman, as has been seen, had returned to Iona, carrying with him the bones of his predecessor, the first apostle of the country, and fol-

[17] See the Legend of the Angel. — *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 7.

[18] See above, p. 313, "Instante subito turbine, præfatus abbas cum Cuthberto et cæteris . . . domum repulsus est." — Bede, c. 8.

[19] See above, p. 333.

[20] "Utquid jaceo? . . . Date baculum et caligas. Statimque exurgens, cœpit tentare incessum baculo innitens." — *Vita*, c. 8.

[21] It is difficult to reconcile the *per aliquot annos* of Bede (c. 9) with the precise dates assigned by Simeon of Durham, or rather Turgott, the official historian of the diocese, who recognized Cuthbert as his patron — dates which are drawn from a comparison of the most ancient records. The Bollandists, agreeing with Simeon, fix in 664, the year of Boswell's death, and consequently the first year of Cuthbert's priorate, his translation to Lindisfarne. The chronology of his life is simple enough. He was born in 637, became a monk at Melrose in 651, prior at Lindisfarne in 664, an anchorite at Farne in 676, bishop in 684. He abdicated in 686, and died in 687.

lowed by all the monks who would not consent to sacrifice their Celtic traditions to Roman unity. It was of importance to preserve the holy island, the special sanctuary of the country, for the religious family of which its foundress had been a member. Abbot Eata of Melrose undertook this difficult mission. He became Abbot of Lindisfarne, and was invested with that kind of episcopal supremacy which has been already described, and which on Wilfrid's first downfall was to change into a full episcopate. He took with him the young Cuthbert, who was not yet thirty, but whom, however, he held alone capable of filling the important office of prior in the great insular community.

The struggle into which Eata and Cuthbert, in their proper persons, had entered against Wilfrid on the subject of Roman rites — a struggle to which they had themselves been victims at Ripon — did not point them out as the best men to introduce the novelties so passionately defended and insisted upon by the new Bishop of Northumbria. Notwithstanding, everything goes to prove that the new abbot and prior of Lindisfarne adopted without reserve the decisions of the Assembly of Whitby, and took serious pains to introduce them into the great Celtic community. Cuthbert, in whom the physical energy of a robust organization was united to an unconquerable gentleness, employed in this task all the resources of his mind and heart. All the rebels had not left with Bishop Colman; some monks still remained who held obstinately by their ancient customs. Cuthbert reasoned with them daily in the meetings of the chapter; his desire was to overcome their objections by patience and moderation alone: he bore their reproaches as long as that was possible; and when his endurance was at an end, raised the sitting without changing countenance or tone, and resumed next morning the course of the debate without ever permitting himself to be moved to anger, or allowing anything to disturb the inestimable gift of kindness and lightheartedness which he had received from God.[22]

[22] "Erant in monasterio fratres qui priscæ suæ consuetudini quam regulari mallent obtemperare custodiæ, quos . . . modesta patientiæ suæ virtute superabat et quotidiano exercitio . . . paulatim convertebat. . . . Sæpius in cœtu fratrum de regula disputans, cum acerrimis contradicentium fatigaretur injuriis . . . placido vultu atque animo egrediens. . . . Erat namque vir ad perferenda fortiter omnia quæ vel animo vel corpore adversa ingerebantur invictissimus, nec minus inter tristia quæ contigissent faciem prætendens hilarem." — *Vita*, c. 46. "Omni hora hilaris et lætus." — *Monach. Lindisf.*, p. 121.

He insists upon uniformity in monastic discipline.

It was not only the orthodox Eastern and other liturgical observances which he had to make acceptable to the monks of Lindisfarne. The difficulty of establishing in his monastery that regularity and uniformity which become monastic life was not less great. Was it the Benedictine rule in all its purity, such as Augustin had brought into Canterbury, and which Wilfrid at that very moment was laboring to communicate to Northumbria, which Cuthbert desired to introduce at Lindisfarne? The opinions of the most competent authorities are divided in respect to this.[23] Everything leads us to believe that the young and holy prior was desirous of adding to the rule of St. Benedict certain special customs justified by the habits and necessities of the Northumbrian climate and people. But his great desire was the strict observance of the rule when once established; and his historian boasts as one of his most remarkable victories the obligation he imposed forever upon the monks of Lindisfarne of wearing a simple and uniform dress, in undyed wool, and thus giving up the passionate liking of the Anglo-Saxons for varied and brilliant colors.[24]

His life both in the cloister and in the world at Lindisfarne. 664-676.

During the twelve years which he passed at Lindisfarne, the life of Cuthbert was identical with that which he had led at Melrose. Within doors this life was spent in the severe practice of all the austerities of the cloister, in manual labor united to

[23] Mabillon maintains the affirmative in opposition to the Bollandists (pp. 96 and 115), which latter go so far as to believe that the troubles which ensued on Wilfrid's arrival at Lindisfarne to replace Cuthbert as bishop, and of which Bede (see above, page 410) speaks so mysteriously, were caused by his attempt to introduce the rule of St. Benedict in place of the observances followed and recommended by Cuthbert. The opinion of Mabillon is founded chiefly on these words of the Lindisfarne monk: "Nobis regularem vitam primum componens constituit, quam usque hodie cum Regula Benedicti observamus." The Bollandists recognize the trace of a modern interpolation in the narrative of this monk, where he says that Cuthbert received on his entrance at Melrose "tonsuræ Petri formam, in modum coronæ spineæ caput Christi cingentis," whereas it is known that Melrose was the citadel of the Celtic tonsure. Let us acknowledge, in passing, that whatever was the rule established by Cuthbert, the saint, himself so austere, softened its regulations greatly for his monks, since we see that he recommended, and even enjoined them to eat a fat goose, upon which Mabillon adds, "Nec mirum si monachi illi anserina carne vescebantur, qui jam tum forsitan volatilia in piscium numero habebant." Finally, we observe that the use of wine was perfectly admitted among the companions of Cuthbert, and that they seem to have been connoisseurs in this matter.

[24] "Ut neque munditiis neque sordibus esset notabilis, ne quis varii aut pretiosi coloris habeat indumentum, sed ea maxime specie quam naturalis ovium lana ministrat." — *Vita*, c. 16.

the punctual celebration of divine worship, and such fervor in prayer that he often slept only one night in the three or four, passing the others in prayer, and in singing the service alone while walking round the aisle to keep himself awake. Outside, the same zeal for preaching, the same solicitude for the salvation and well-being, temporal as well as spiritual, of the Northumbrian people, was apparent in him. He carried to them the word of life; he soothed their sufferings by curing miraculously a crowd of diseases which were beyond the power of the physicians — a class which does not seem to have been wanting among the Anglo-Saxons of this period, as they are mentioned almost at every page of their miraculous records. But the valiant missionary specially assailed the diseases of the soul, and made use of all the tenderness and all the ardor of his own spirit to reach them. When he celebrated mass before the assembled crowd, his visible emotions, his inspired looks, his trembling voice, all contributed to penetrate and overpower the multitude. The Anglo-Saxon Christians who came in crowds to open their hearts to him in the confessional, were still more profoundly impressed: though he was a bold and inflexible judge of impenitent vice, he felt and expressed the tenderest compassion for the contrite sinner. He was the first to weep over the sins which he pardoned in the name of God; and he himself fulfilled the penances which he imposed as the condition of absolution, thus gaining by his humility the hearts which he longed to convert and cure.[25]

He becomes an anchorite in the desert island of Farne. 676.

But neither the life of a cenobite nor the labors of a missionary could satisfy the aspirations of his soul after perfection. When he was not quite forty, after holding his priorship at Lindisfarne for twelve years, he resolved to leave monastic life, and to live as a hermit in a sterile and desert island, visible from Lindisfarne, which lay in the centre of the archipelago, south of the holy isle, and almost opposite the fortified capital of the Northumbrian kings at Bamborough.[26] No one dared to

[25] "Circuibat insulam, . . . pariter et longitudinem psalmodiæ ac vigiliarum incedendo alleviabat. . . . Circumquaque morantem vulgi multitudinem more suo crebra visitatione ad cœlestia quærenda et promerenda succendebat. . . . Spiritu mansuetudinis modestus ad ignoscendum pœnitentibus, ita ut nonnunquam confitentibus sibi peccata sua his qui deliquerant, prior ipse miserans infirmos, lacrymis funderet, et quid peccatori agendum esset, ipse justus suo præmonstraret exemplo." — *Vita*, c. 16.

[26] A minute description and plan of this island, now inhabited and crowned by two lighthouses, will be found in the *History of St. Cuthbert*, by Mgr Eyre; London, 1858.

live on this island, which was called Farne, in consequence of its being supposed the haunt of demons. Cuthbert took possession of it as a soldier of Christ, victorious over the tyranny of evil, and built there a palace worthy of himself, hollowing out of the living rock a cell from which he could see nothing but the sky, that he might not be disturbed in his contemplations. The hide of an ox suspended before the entrance of his cavern, and which he turned according to the direction of the wind, afforded him a poor defence against the intemperance of that wild climate. His holy historian tells us that he exercised sway over the elements and brute creation as a true monarch of the land which he had conquered for Christ, and with that sovereign empire over nature which sin alone has taken from us.[27] He lived on the produce of a little field of barley, sowed and cultivated by his own hands, but so small that the inhabitants of the coast reported among themselves that he was fed by angels with bread made in paradise.

Popular traditions respecting his sojourn at Farne.

The legends of Northumbria linger lovingly upon the solitary sojourn of their great national and popular saint in this basaltic isle. They attribute to him the extraordinary gentleness and familiarity of a peculiar species of aquatic birds which came when called, allowed themselves to be taken, stroked, and caressed, and whose down was of remarkable softness. In ancient times they swarmed about this rock, and they are still to be found there, though much diminished in number since curious visitors have come to steal their nests and shoot the birds. These sea-fowl are found nowhere else in the British Isles, and are called the *Birds of St. Cuthbert*.[28] It was he, according to the narrative of a monk of the thirteenth century, who inspired them with a hereditary trust in man, by taking them as the companions of his solitude, and guaranteeing to them that they should never be disturbed in their homes.[29]

[27] "Miles Christi, devicta tyrannorum acie, monarchus terræ, quam adierat, factus est. . . . Condidit civitatem suo aptam imperio . . . vivam cædendo rupem. . . . Qui enim Auctori omnium creaturarum fideliter et integro corde famulatur, non est mirandum si ejus imperiis ac votis omnis creatura deserviat. At nos plerumque idcirco subjectæ nobis creaturæ dominum perdimus, quia Domino et Creatori omnium ipsi servire negligimus." — *Vita*, c. 17, 21.

[28] Eider or Cuthbert-Ducks, — the *Oie à duvet* of Buffon, the *Anas mollissima* of Linnæus.

[29] "Aves illæ B. Cuthberti specialiter nominantur. . . . Ipse, adhuc viv-

It is he, too, according to the fishers of the surrounding islands, who makes certain little shells of the genus *Entrochus*, which are only to be found on this coast, and which have received the name of St Cuthbert's Beads. They believe that he is still to be seen by night seated on a rock, and using another as an anvil for his work. This tradition, like many others, has been consecrated by Sir Walter Scott in the poetic picture which he has drawn of the Northumbrian coast, between the two great monasteries of Whitby and Lindisfarne.[30]

His tender charity towards the penitents who came to consult him.

The pious anchorite, however, in condemning himself to the trials of solitude, had no intention of withdrawing from the cares of fraternal charity. He continued to receive frequent visits, in the first place from his neighbors and brethren at Lindisfarne, and in addition from all who came to consult him upon the state of their souls, as well as to seek consolation from him in adversity. The number of these pilgrims of sorrow was countless. They came not only from the neighboring shores, but from the most distant provinces. Throughout all England the rumor spread that on a desert rock of the Northumbrian coast there lived a solitary who was the friend of God, and skilled in the healing of human suffering. In this expectation no one was deceived; no man carried back from the sea-beaten island the same burden of suffering, temptation, or remorse which he had taken there. Cuthbert had consolation for all troubles, light for all the sorrowful mysteries of life, counsel for all its perils, a helping hand to all the hopeless, a heart open to all who suffered. He could

ens, avibus illis firmam pacem et quietem in patribus suis dederat. . . . Quod patribus avium antiquitus dederat, hoc. de illarum genere pullis procreandis, et filiis hereditarie in pacis et misericordiæ custodia perpetuis temporibus conservando præstabat. . . . Dum solitarius in rupe secum commaneret, ita edomuit prædicta volatilia et natilitia. . . . Se palpantes capere, contrectare et tenere permittunt . . . in gremio tuo ludendo reticent . . . ad mensam tuam si incola fueris veniunt . . . ad manus etiam blandientis, alis palpitantibus, confugiunt." — Reginald Dunelmensis, *De Admirandis Cuthberti Virtutibus*, c. 27. Cf. Raine's *St. Cuthbert;* Edinburgh, 1828, p. 22.

[30] "But fain Saint Hilda's nuns would learn,
If on a rock by Lindisfarne,
Saint Cuthbert sits, and toils to frame
The seaborn beads that bear his name.
Such tales had Whitby's fishers told,
And said they might his shape behold,
And hear his anvil sound."

Scott, *Marmion*, canto ii.

draw from terrestrial anguish a proof of the joys of heaven, deduce the certainty of these joys from the terrible evanescence of both good and evil in this world, and light up again in sick souls the fire of charity — the only defence, he said, against those ambushes of the old enemy which always take our hearts captive when they are emptied of divine and brotherly love.[31]

His hospitality.

To make his solitude more accessible to these visitors, and above all to his brethren from Lindisfarne, he had built at some distance from the cave which was his dwelling-place, at a point where the boats could land their passengers, a kind of *parloir* and refectory for the use of his guests. There he himself met, conversed, and ate with them, especially when, as he has himself told, the monks came to celebrate with him such a great feast as Christmas. At such moments he went freely into all their conversations and discussions, interrupting himself from time to time to remind them of the necessity of watchfulness and prayer. The monks answered him, "Nothing is more true; but we have so many days of vigil, of fasts and prayers! Let us at least to-day rejoice in the Lord."[32] The venerable Bede, who has preserved to us the precious memory of this exchange of brotherly familiarity, has not disdained to tell us also of the reproaches addressed by Cuthbert to his brothers for not eating a fat goose which he had hung on the partition-wall of his guests' refectory, in order that they might thoroughly fortify themselves before they embarked upon that stormy sea to return to their monastery.[33]

This tender charity and courteous activity were united in him to treasures of humility. He would not allow any one to suspect him of ranking the life of an anchorite above that

[31] "Nec eos fefellit spes. Nullus ab eo sine gaudio consolationie abibat; nullum dolor animi quem illo attulerat redeuntem comitatus est. Noverat quippe mœstos pia exhortatione refovere: sciebat angustiatis gaudia vitæ cœlestis ad memoriam revocare . . . didicerat tentatis multifarias antiqui hostis pandere versutias, quibus facile carperetur animus, qui vel fraterno, vel divino amore nudatus exsisteret." — *Vita*, c. 22.

[32] "Quondam cum adhuc demorarer in mea insula solitarius. . . . Obseco, fratres, caute agamus et vigilanter. . . . Cumque post hoc aliquandiu epulis, exsultationi ac fabulis indulgeremus, rursus admonere cœpi ut solliciti exsisteremus in orationibus et vigiliis. . . . Et illi: Bene, inquiunt, et optime doces, sed tamen, quia abundant dies jejuniorum, orationis et vigiliarum, hodie gaudeamus in Domino . . . epulantibus nobis et diem lætum ducentibus." — *Vita*, c. 27.

[33] "Pendebat autem auca in pariete. . . . Citissime mittite eam in caldaria: coquite et comedite, et sic in nomen Domini ascendite navem ac domum redite." — *Vita*, c. 36.

of a member of a community. "It must not be supposed," he said, "because I prefer to live out of reach of every secular care, that my life is superior to that of others. The life of good cenobites, who obey their abbot in everything, and whose time is divided between prayer, work, and fasting, is much to be admired. I know many among them whose souls are more pure, and their graces more exalted than mine; especially, and in the first rank, my dear old Boswell, who received and trained me at Melrose in my youth."[34]

Thus passed, in that dear solitude, and among these friendly surroundings, eight pleasant years, the sweetest of his life, and precisely those during which all Northumberland was convulsed by the struggle between Wilfrid and the new king, Egfrid. All those important events, the expulsion of the great bishop from his see of York, his first appeal to Rome, his return with a verdict in his favor, his fruitless application to Egfrid, his imprisonment and exile, have left no trace upon the life which Cuthbert, tranquil and happy, lived on his island rock, until a day arrived when the reverberation of this blow struck him in his turn. 676-684.

This was the day upon which the king of the Northumbrians, accompanied by his principal nobles and almost all the community of Lindisfarne, landed upon the rock of Farne, to beg, kneeling and with tears,[35] that he would accept the episcopal dignity to which he had just been promoted in the synod of Twyford, presided over by the Archbishop Theodore. He yielded only after a long resistance, himself weeping when he did so. It was, however permitted to him to delay his consecration for six months, till Easter, which left him still a winter to pass in his dear solitude, before he went to York, where he was consecrated by the primate, Theodore, assisted by six bishops. He would not, however, accept the diocese of Hexham, to which he had been first appointed, but persuaded his friend Eata, the Bishop and Abbot of Lindisfarne, to give up to him the monastic bishopric where he had already lived so long, and to occupy in his place the diocese created to vex Wilfrid in his own monastery. There is, however, no

He is made Bishop of Lindisfarne.

26th March, 685.

[34] "Jure est cœnobitarum vita miranda . . . quorum plurimos novi parvitatem meam longe et munditia mentis et culmine gratiæ prophetalis anteire. E quibus . . . Boisilus qui me quondam senex adolescentem nutriebat." — *Vita*, c. 22.

[35] "Genuflectunt omnes, adjurant per Dominum, lacrymas fundunt, donec ipsum quoque lacrymis plenum dulcibus extrahunt latebris." — *Vita*, c. 24. Cf. *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 28.

evidence that he was influenced in this change by any reluctance to become an accomplice, even indirectly, in the spoliation of which Wilfrid had been the victim.[36]

The diocese of Lindisfarne spread far to the west, much beyond Hexham. The Britons of Cumbria, who had come to be tributaries of the Northumbrian kings, were thus included in it. King Egfrid's deed of gift, in which he gives the district of Cartmell, *with all the Britons* who dwell in it, to Bishop Cuthbert, still exists.[37] The Roman city of Carlisle, transformed into an Anglo-Saxon fortress, was also under his sway, with all the surrounding monasteries. It has been already told how the inhabitants were exhibiting to him the fine ruins, the walls and fountains of their city, at the moment when the mysterious intimation of Egfrid's downfall was given to him.[38] It was at Carlisle that he offered the first consolation to Queen Ermenburga, whom that calamity made a widow; and it was there also he returned to give to the queen the veil of the brides of Christ.

He remains a monk and missionary during his episcopate.

The episcopate of Cuthbert attaches itself to general history only by means of this dramatic episode of Carlisle, and by his connection with the enemy of Wilfrid, from this moment struck in her turn, and converted by adversity. But the history of his life receives an additional lustre from the virtues and good works which distinguished the brief course of this apostolical

[36] See above, page 375. Let us repeat here that from the first deposition of Wilfrid in 678, his vast diocese, which comprehended all Northumberland, had been divided into two new dioceses, the boundaries of which seem to have been those of the two kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia. The seat of the former remained at York, and that of the latter was established either at Hexham or Lindisfarne. The Abbot of Lindisfarne and of Melrose, Eata, was placed in the Bernician bishopric. In 681, Archbishop Theodore, always occupied with the thought of diminishing the size of dioceses, separated Hexham from Lindisfarne, and, leaving Eata in his monastic cathedral, nominated to Hexham Trumbert, who had just been deposed by the synod of 684 *pro culpa cujusdam inobedientiæ*. When he gave up Lindisfarne to his former prior, Cuthbert, and went to Hexham, he took up again the government of a church which he had already occupied for three years. There was also the monastic bishopric of Abercorn, quite in the north, the bishop of which, Trumwine, accompanied Egfrid when he went to Cuthbert to pray him to accept the episcopate. Eata died in 686, and was replaced by St. John of Beverley.

[37] Camden's *Britanniæ*, iii. p. 131. Melrose was in the diocese of Lindisfarne; thus the population of Cuthbert's diocese was in a great part composed of vanquished races — Picts and Britons. This diocese was produced by the reaction of the foreign population whose lands had been absorbed in the kingdom of Bernicia." — Varin, p. 33.

[38] See above, p. 402.

mission. His new dignity made no difference in his character, nor even in his mode of life. He retained his old habits as a cenobite, and even as a hermit. In the midst of his episcopal pomp he remained always the monk and missionary of old. His whole episcopate indeed, seems to bear the character of a mission indefinitely prolonged. He went over his vast diocese, to administer confirmation to converts, traversing a crowd more attentive and respectful than ever, lavishing upon it all kinds of benefits, alms, clothing, sermons, miraculous cures — penetrating as of old into hamlets and distant corners, climbing the hills and downs, sleeping under a tent, and sometimes indeed finding no other shelter than in the huts of branches brought from the nearest wood to the desert, in which he had made the torrent of his eloquence and charity to gush forth.[39]

Tenderness and compassion of his heart.

Here also we find illustrations, as at all previous periods of his life, of the most delightful feature of his good and holy soul. In the obscure missionary of Melrose, in the already celebrated prior of Lindisfarne, and still more, if that is possible, in the powerful and venerated bishop, the same heart, overflowing with tenderness and compassion, is always to be found. The supernatural power given to him to cure the most cruel diseases was wonderful. But in his frequent and friendly intercourse with the great Anglo-Saxon earls, the *ealdormen*, as well as with the mixed populations of Britons, Picts, Scots, and English, whom he gathered under his crosier, the principal feature in the numerous and detailed narratives which remain to us, and which gives to them a beauty as of youth, always attractive, is his intense and active sympathy for those human sorrows which in all ages are the same, always so keen, and capable of so little consolation. The more familiar the details of these meetings between the heart of a saint and true priest and the simple and impetuous hearts of the first English Christians, the more attractive do they become; and we cannot resist the inclination of presenting to our readers some incidents which show at once the liveliness of domestic affections among those newly-baptized barbarians, and their

[39] "Implebat episcopi dignitatem, non tamen ut propositum monachi et anachoretæ virtutem desereret." — Bolland., p. 122. "Inter frequentiam turbarum monachicæ vitæ rigorem sollicitus observare . . . dum parochiam suam circumiens omnibus ruris casis et viculis monita salutis largiretur . . . devenit in montana et agresta loca, ubi multi erant de circumpositis villulus, quibus manus erat imponenda. . . . Tetenderunt ei tentoria, et cæsis de vicina silva ramusculis." — *Vita*, c. 26, 29, 32.

The mad countess.

filial and familiar confidence in their pastor. One of the ealdormen of King Egfrid arrived one day in breathless haste at Lindisfarne, overwhelmed with grief, his wife, a woman as pious and generous as himself, having been seized with a fit of violent madness. But he was ashamed to disclose the nature of the attack; it seemed to him a sort of chastisement from heaven, disgracing a creature hitherto so chaste and honored: all that he said was that she was approaching death; and he begged that a priest might be given him to carry to her the viaticum, and that when she died he might be permitted to bury her in the holy isle. Cuthbert heard his story, and said to him with much emotion, "This is my business; no one but myself can go with you." As they rode on their way together, the husband wept, and Cuthbert, looking at him, and seeing the cheeks of the rough warrior wet with tears, divined the whole, and during all the rest of the journey consoled and encouraged him, explaining to him that madness was not a punishment of crime, but a trial which God inflicted sometimes upon the innocent. "Besides," he added, "when we arrive we shall find her cured; she will come to meet us, and will help me to dismount from my horse, taking, according to her custom, the reins in her hand." And so the event proved; for, says the historian, the demon did not dare to await the coming of the Holy Ghost, of which the man of God was full. The noble lady, delivered from her bondage, rose as if from a profound sleep, and stood on the threshold to greet the holy friend of the house, seizing the reins of his horse, and joyfully announcing her sudden cure.[40]

On another occasion, a certain Count Heunna, from whom he sought hospitality during one of his pastoral journeys, received him on his knees, thanking him for his visit, but at the same time telling that his wife was at the point of death, and he himself in despair. "However," said the count, "I

[40] "Erat præfectus Egfridi regis Hildmer nomine . . . a B. Cuthberto specialiter dilectus, et . . . crebro ab eo visitatus. Cujus uxor . . . membra in diversa raptando, non minimum cunctis incutebat horrorem. . . Adscendit vir equum et concitus venit. . . . Erubescebat eam confiteri insanam quam vir Domini sobriam semper videre consueverat . . . olim tam pudicam et castam. . . . Hoc est meum ministerium: non alium sed ipse tecum pergere debes. Cumque agerent iter, videns socium suum flentem . . . profluentibus in maxillas lacrymis . . . consolari cum mitissimis verbis cœpit. . . . Ipsa mihi occurrens in acceptione habenarum istius equi quas nunc teneo . . . ministrabit nobis." — *Vita*, c. 15. "Viro Dei gratulabunda, occurrens, jumentum quo sedebat per frenum tenuit." — BOLLAND, p. 120.

firmly believe that were you to give her your blessing, she would be restored to health, or at least delivered by a speedy death from her long and cruel sufferings." The saint immediately sent one of his priests, without entering into the sick-room himself, to sprinkle her with water which he had blessed. The patient was at once relieved; and herself came to act as cupbearer to the prelate, offering him, in name of all her family, that cup of wine which, under the name of the *loving cup*, has continued since the time of the Anglo-Saxons to form a part of all solemn public banquets.[41]

The mother consoled.

A contagious disease at another time broke out in one part of his diocese, to which Cuthbert immediately betook himself. After having visited and consoled all the remaining inhabitants of one village, he turned to the priest who accompanied him, and asked, "Is there still any one sick in this poor place whom I can bless before I depart?" "Then," says the priest, who has preserved this story to us, "I showed him in the distance a poor woman bathed in tears, one of whose sons was already dead, and who held the other in her arms, just about to render his last breath. The bishop rushed to her, and taking the dying child from its mother's arms, kissed it first, then blessed it, and restored it to the mother, saying to her, as the Son of God said to the widow of Nain, 'Woman, weep not; have no more fear or sorrow; your son is saved, and no more victims to this pestilence shall perish here.'"[42]

His relations with women;

No saint of his time or country had more frequent or affectionate intercourse than Cuthbert with the nuns, whose numbers and influence were daily increasing among the Anglo-Saxons, and especially in Northumberland. The greater part of them lived together in the great monasteries, such as Whitby and Coldingham; but some, especially those who were widows or of advanced age, lived in their own houses or with their relatives. Such was

[41] "Pervenit ad comitis vicum. Ille . . . rem ut erat miserabilis et lacrymabilis omni familiæ, hoc est, uxoris velut hurticæ, vitam desperabilem episcopo revelavit. . . . Jam surgens, sicut socrus Petri, sanata ministravit eis. Illa enim primum totius episcopo *poculum lætitiæ* dedit, qui sibi exspiranti calicem mortis auferebat." — Bolland., p. 122.

[42] "Presbyter Tidi . . . in quodam vico qui dicitur Medelpong. . . . Conversus ad me mitissime dixit: Est-ne aliquis in villa hac adhuc pestilentia languens? . . . Ego jam ostendens signavi ei mulierem . . . quæ lacrymis faciem rigantibus præteritam ac præsentem testabatur ærumnam . . . O mulier, noli flere . . . ne metuas, nec mœsta sis." — Bolland., p 124. *Vita*, c. 33.

With his foster-mother;

a woman devoted to the service of God, who had watched over Cuthbert's childhood (for he seems to have been early left an orphan) while he kept his sheep on the hills near Melrose, from the eighth year of his age until his entrance into the convent at the age of fifteen. He was tenderly grateful to her for her maternal care, and, when he became a missionary, took advantage of every occasion furnished to him by his apostolic journeys to visit her whom he called his mother, in the village where she lived. On one occasion, when he was with her, a fire broke out in the village, and the flames, increased by a violent wind, threatened all the neighboring roofs. "Fear nothing, dear mother," the young missionary said to her; "this fire will do you no harm;" and he began to pray. Suddenly the wind changed: the village was saved, and with it the thatched roof which sheltered the old age of her who had protected his infancy.[43]

With Queen Ethel-dreda;

From the cottage of his foster-mother he went to the palaces of queens. The noble Queen of Northumberland, Etheldreda, the saint and virgin, *regia virgo*, says the historian, before she left her throne and conjugal life to bury herself in the cloister, loved to surround herself with the religious of both sexes most renowned for their piety, and to converse familiarly with them for the good of her soul. She often called the young prior of Lindisfarne to her as well as Wilfrid, her guide and spiritual master, and this is the only occasion on which a meeting between these two contemporaries, so venerable yet so different, can be supposed to have taken place. The holy queen had a great friendship for Cuthbert. She overwhelmed him and his monastery with gifts from her own possessions, and wishing, besides, to offer him a personal token of her close affection, she embroidered for him, with her own hands (for she embroidered beautifully), a stole and maniple covered with gold and precious stones. She chose to give him such a present that he might wear this memorial of her only in the presence of God whom they both served, and accordingly would be obliged to keep her always in mind at the holy sacrifice.[44]

[43] "A quadam muliere, nomine Kenspid, adhuc vivens, sanctimonialis vidua. . . . Namque eam matrem appellavit, sæpe visitans eam. . . . Ventus abripiebat ignitos fœnei tecti fasciculos. . . . Præfata Dei famula concita accurrit. . . . Non timeas, inquit, mater; animi æquior esto: non enim tibi tuisve hæc quamlibet ferox flamma nocebit." — Bolland., p. 120. *Vita*, c. 14.

[44] "Regia virgo . . . sanctæ religionis ministros in fœdus amicitiæ viros

Cuthbert was on still more intimate terms with the holy princesses, who, placed at the head of great communities of nuns, and sometimes even of monks, exercised so powerful an influence upon the Anglo-Saxon race, and particularly on Northumbria. While he was still at Melrose the increasing fame of his sanctity and eloquence brought him often into the presence of the sister of King Oswy, who then reigned over the two Northumbrian kingdoms. This princess, Ebba,[45] was abbess of the double monastery of Coldingham, of which mention has already been made, the farthest north of all the religious establishments of Northumbria, and that in which Queen Etheldreda sought refuge first after leaving her husband. Cuthbert was the guest for several days of the royal abbess; but he did not intermit on this account his pious exercises, nor, above all, his austerities and long prayers by night on the sea-shore. During the day he preached to Ebba's two communities, edifying them by the wonderful harmony between his life and his doctrine.[46] Perhaps he was not himself equally edified by all he saw, if we give faith to the assertions of later historians, who trace back to that visit the severe regulations attributed to him in respect to the intercourse of monks with women of whatsoever condition.[47]

With the great abbesses;

Ebba of Coldingham;

ac mulieres sibi admittebat, quorum consilio atque consortio in omnem sanctimoniam provehi . . . arbitrabatur . . . præsertim . . . in familiaritatem colligendam fore ex cœtu monastico asserebat, inter quos . . . vitæ sanctitatis decore insignitum Cuthbertum . . . in gratiam ac dilectionem exhibuit. . . . Opus eximium et præclarum . . . ex auro et lapidibus pretiosis, propriis ut fertur manibus docta auri texturæ ingenio . . . ob internæ dilectionis intuitum . . . festinavit. . . . Juste enim virgo virginem et dilecta dilectum tali decebat oppugnari obsequio. . . . Unde solum in conspectu regis Domini assistens uteretur." — Thomas Eliensis, *Vita S. Etheldr.*, c. 9. This writer of the twelfth century affirms that the stole and maniple embroidered by Etheldreda for Cuthbert were venerated till his time at the Cathedral of Durham.

[45] "Sanctimonialis femina et mater ancillarum Christi nomine Ebba, regens monasterium . . . religione pariter ac nobilitate cunctis honorabilis." — *Vita*, c. 10.

[46] "Nec negare potuit quod ab eo charitas ex ancillæ Dei corde poposcit. . . . Dies aliquot ibi permanens, viam justitiæ quam predicabatur, omnibus actu pariter ac sermone pandebat." — *Vita*, c. 10.

[47] No trace of this prohibition is to be found in Bede, or in the narrative of the monk of Lindisfarne. But an obstinate tradition, repeated by all more recent writers, declares that Cuthbert forbade the entrance of women into the church of the monastery at Lindisfarne. When his body was transferred, along with the episcopal see, at an after period to Durham, the same prohibition was maintained there. No woman could enter the great cathedral of that city. The history of this celebrated church is full of anecdotes relative to the attempts made by ladies of high rank to evade this

With Elfleda of Whitby.

But the authority of this tradition, weakened as it is by the total silence of Cuthbert's biographers, is contradicted by his example. To the end of his life he maintained a very intimate and constant friendship with another abbess of the blood-royal of Northumbria, Elfleda, niece of St. Oswald and of King Oswy, who, though still quite young,[48] exercised an influence much greater than that of Ebba upon the men and the events of her time. It has been seen,[49] that, out of consideration for her, the holy anchorite left his islet of Farne to hold a conference with her in another island nearer to Whitby, in respect to the anxieties by which she was assailed on account of her brother, King Egfrid. Cuthbert was heartily attached to all the royal family of Northumbria, the Bernician dynasty, which had been restored in his childhood under the great and saintly Oswald. He had a special devotion for that martyred king, whose head was represented on his seal. Oswald's niece, the Abbess Elfleda, before she became the generous and powerful protectress of Wilfrid, was thus the friend and client of St. Cuthbert, linking together these two illustrious personages as the holy Queen Etheldreda had done. She had the liveliest affection for the Prior of Lindisfarne, and at the same time an absolute confidence in his sanctity. When she was assailed by an alarming illness, which fell into paralysis, and

humiliation. As time went on the severity relaxed, and there is still shown in the cathedral a line in blue marble which no woman could cross, but which permitted them at least to enter the nave, and see from a distance the choir and shrine of the saint. One of his historians adds: "Non tamen sexum illum detestando persequitur, sed occasionis delinquendi materiam amputando elidere conatur." — Reginaldus Dunelmensis, *De Admirandis B. Cuthberti Vertutibus*, p. 151. The Irish version of his Life gives two reasons for this prohibition — the first, that the daughter of the Pictish king, "in domo patris adulterata a quovis juvene," had represented the young hermit as being the father of her child; and afterwards, that, when he was a bishop, and during a pontifical procession, he saw himself followed by a woman of dazzling beauty, who attracted the eyes and troubled the minds of all present. "Vidit plerosque hominium cachinno resultando ridere. . . . Circumspiciens videt quandam sub specie mulieris, et crine, et facie, cum nitente vestium varietate, miro modo fulgentem. Omnem humanum effigiem sui pulchritudine præcedebat. . . . Quicumque illius vultus inspexerant præ nimiæ cupidinis lascivia pene seipsos excesserant." It was a devilish apparition, which he put to flight by sprinkling it with holy water. From that time until the twelfth century women were forbidden to be interred in churches dedicated to him, *Libellus de Ortu*, c. 29. One of these churches gave its name to the town and county of Kirkcudbright (Cuthbrichtiskhirche), Reginaldus, c. 84.

[48] She was born in 654, and was not thirty when Cuthbert met her in Coquet Isle. See the genealogical table, Appendix VI., p. 752.

[49] Page 407.

found no remedy from physicians, she cried, "Ah, had I but something which belonged to my dear Cuthbert, I am sure I should be cured." A short time after her friend sent her a linen girdle, which she hastened to put on, and in three days she was healed.[50]

Shortly before his death, and during his last pastoral visitation, Cuthbert went to see Elfleda in the neighborhood of the great Monastery of Whitby, to consecrate a church which she had built there, and to converse with her for the last time. They dined together, and during the meal, seeing his knife drop from his trembling hand in the abstraction of supernatural thoughts, she had a last opportunity of admiring his prophetic intuition, and his constant care for the salvation of souls. The fatigue of the holy bishop, who said, laughingly, "I cannot eat all day long; you must give me a little rest" — the eagerness and pious curiosity of the young abbess, anxious to know and do everything, who rushes up breathless during the ceremony of the dedication to ask from the bishop a *memento* for a monk whose death she had just heard of — all those details form a picture complete in its simplicity, upon which the charmed mind can repose amid the savage habits and wild vicissitudes of the struggle, then more violent than ever, between the Northumbrians and Picts, the Saxons and the Celts.[51]

His last visit to the Abbess Verca.

But the last of all his visits was for another abbess, less illustrious and powerful than the two princesses of the blood of Ethelfrid, but also of high birth, and not less dear to his heart, if we may judge by the mark of affection which he gave her on his deathbed. This was Verca, abbess of one of that long line of monasteries which traced the shores of the Northern Sea, seated on the high promontories, or at the mouths of the

[50] "Sanctimonialis virgo et regalis. . . . Multo virum Dei semper excolebat amore. . . . Cum nil curationis adhibere medici. . . . Utinam haberem aliquid de rebus Cuthberti mei! Scio certe et credo et confido in Domino quia cito sanarer." — Bolland., 121. *Vita*, c. 23.

[51] "Fidelissima abbatissa Eltleda de sancto episcopo aliud scientiæ spiritualis miraculum mihi revelavit. . . . Cum in parochia quæ dicitur Osingadum, simul in convivio sederent . . . præscius vicini sui obitus . . . rogatus a nobilissima et sanctissima virgine . . . venit ad possessionem monasterii ipsius, quatenus ibidem et ipsam videre atque alloqui, et ecclesiam dedicare deberet. . . . Manus ejus tremefacta, cultellus quem tenebat decidit in mensam. Jocose respondit: Num tota die manducare valebam? jam aliquando quiescere debui. Hæc audiens illa confestim misit ad majus suum monasterium. . . . Illa statim ad episcopum cucurrit . . . anhelans in basilicam pervenit." — Monach. Lindisf., ap. Bolland., 123. Bede, *Vita*, c. 34.

Northumbrian rivers. Her convent was on the mouth of the Tyne, the river which divided the two Northumbrian kingdoms, Deïra and Bernicia, and to it the body of the holy King Oswin had been carried after his murder.[52] She gave Cuthbert a magnificent reception; but the bishop was ill, and after the mid-day meal which was usual in all the Benedictine monasteries, he became thirsty. Wine and beer were offered to him, yet he would take nothing but water; but this water, after it had touched his lips, seemed to the monks of Tynemouth, who drank the remainder, the best wine they had ever tasted. Cuthbert, who retained nothing of the robust health of his youth, already suffered from the first attacks of the disease which carried him off. His pious friend was no doubt struck by his feebleness, for she offered him, as the last pledge of spiritual union, a piece of very fine linen to be his shroud.[53]

He returns to his rock to die. Jan., 687.

Two short years of the episcopate had sufficed to consume his strength. After celebrating the feast of Christmas in 686 with the monks of Lindisfarne, the presentiment of approaching death determined him to abdicate, and to return to his isle of Farne, there to prepare for the last struggle. Here he lived but two months in the dear and pleasant solitude which was his supreme joy, tempering its sweetness by redoubled austerities. When his monks came to visit him in his isle, which storms often made

[52] See above, p. 251.

[53] "A religiosa et ad sæculum quoque nobilissima famula Christi Verca abbatissa magnifice susceptus, postquam de meridiana quiete surrexerunt. . . . Confitebantur alterutrum quod videretur sibi nunquam melius vinum bibisse, sicut unus ex ipsis postea in nostro monasterio . . . sua mihi relatione testatus est." — Bede, *Vita*, c. 35. I do not know why the Bollandists, Mabillon, and M. Varin, agree in placing the monastery of Verca, not at Tynemouth on the Northumbrian Tyne, which flows past Hexham and Newcastle, on the road from Whitby to Lindisfarne, but at Tyninghame, a little monastery founded by St. Baldred († 606), also on the seaside like Tynemouth, but more to the north, at the mouth of the Scotch Tyne, which traverses Lothian and flows through Haddington. The remains of this very ancient monastery are still to be seen in the Earl of Haddidgton's park. This district had been restored to the Pictish dominion after the defeat of Egfrid and the flight of the Bishop of Abercorn, with all the communities of the country. The last historian of our saint, Mgr. Eyre, having more complete information, and writing on the spot, proves that it was Tynemouth, where there were two monasteries, one of monks on the north, the other of nuns on the south of the stream. Mr. Joseph Robertson is of the same opinion; he attributes the error of Mabillon to the inexact information given him by a priest of the Scottish college at Paris, who, though a learned man, had the mania, so common among the Scotch, of claiming for his country both places and personages belonging to Ireland and England.

inaccessible for weeks together, they found him thin, tremulous, and almost exhausted. One of them, who has given us a narrative of the end of his life, revived him a little by giving him warm wine to drink, then seating himself by the side of the worn-out bishop upon his bed of stone to sustain him, received from his beloved lips the last confidences and last exhortations of the venerated master. The visits of his monks were very sweet to him, and he lavished upon them to the last moment proofs of his paternal tenderness, and of his minute care for their spiritual and temporal well-being. His last illness was long and painful. He fixed beforehand the place of his burial, near the oratory which he had hollowed in the rock, and at the foot of a cross which he had himself planted. "I would fain repose," said he, "in this spot, where I have fought my little battle for the Lord, where I desire to finish my course, and from whence I hope that my merciful Judge will call me to the crown of righteousness. You will bury me, wrapped in the linen which I have kept for my shroud, out of love for the Abbess Verca, the friend of God, who gave it to me."[54]

The abbess's shroud.

He ended his holy life preaching peace, humility, and the love of that unity which he thought he had succeeded in establishing in the great Anglo-Celtic sanctuary, the new abbot of which, Herefrid, begged of him a last message as a legacy to his community. "Be unanimous in your counsels," the dying bishop said to him, in his faint voice; "live in good accord with the other servants of Christ; despise none of the faithful who ask your hospitality; treat them with friendly familiarity, not esteeming yourself better than others who have the same faith and often the same life. But have no communion with those who withdraw from the unity of Catholic peace, either by the

His last exhortation.

[54] "Ad dilectum eremiticæ conversationis agonem quantocius remeare curavit, quatenus indita sibi sollicitudinis mundanæ spineta liberior priscæ compunctionis flamma consumeret. . . . Qui cum duo menses in magna repetitæ suæ quietis exsultatione transigeret, multo consuetæ districtionis rigore corpus mentemque constringeret. . . . Vinum calefaciens attuli . . . videbam namque in facie ejus quia multum inedia simul et languore erat defessus. Completa curatione resedit quietus in stratu: resedi et ego juxta eum. . . . Hic ubi quantulumcumque pro Domino certamen certavi . . . unde ad coronam justitiæ sublevandam me a pio judice spero. . . . Nolui quidem ea vivens indui, sed pro amore dilectæ Deo feminæ, quæ hanc mihi misit, Vercæ abbatissæ, ad obvolvendum corpus meum reservare curavi."— *Vita*, c. 36, 37. This shroud, recognizable by its extreme fineness, was found when his tomb was opened in 1104, according to Reginald, *De Admirandus*, &c., c. 41.

illegal celebration of Easter or by practical ill-doing. Remember always, if you must make a choice, that I infinitely prefer that you should leave this place, carrying my bones with you, rather than that you should remain here bent under the yoke of wicked heresy. Learn and observe with diligence the Catholic decrees of the fathers, and also the rules of monastic life which God has deigned to give you by my hands. I know that many have despised me in my life, but after my death you will see that my doctrine has not been despicable." These energetic words, and the allusion to his predecessor Colman, who had left Lindisfarne, carrying with him the bones of the holy Bishop Aïdan, rather than submit to ritualistic unity with Rome, shows that this unity had in the Celt Cuthbert a champion less impetuous and less rash than Wilfrid, but not less resolute and devoted.[55]

His death, 20th March, 687.

This effort was the last. He lost the power of speech, received the last sacraments in silence, and died, raising his eyes and arms to heaven, at the hour when it was usual to sing matins, in the night of the 20th March, 687. One of his attendant simmediately mounted to the summit of the rock, where the lighthouse is now placed, and gave to the monks of Lindisfarne, by waving a lighted torch, the signal agreed upon to announce the death of the greatest saint who has given glory to that famous isle. He was but fifty, and had worn the monastic habit for thirty-five years.

His most intimate friend dies on the same day and at the same hour.

Among many friends, he had one who was at once his oldest and most beloved — a priest called Herbert, who lived as an anchorite in an island of Lake Derwentwater, one of those fine lakes which make the district of Cumberland and Westmoreland the most picturesque part of England. Every year Herbert came from his peaceful lake to visit his friend in the other island, beaten and undermined continually by the great waves of the Northern Sea; and upon that wild rock, to the accompaniment of winds and waves, they passed several days together in a tender solitude and intimacy, talking of the life

[55] "Pondus ægritudinis facilitatem loquendi minoraverat. Verum me diligentius inquirente, quem hereditarium sermonem, quod ultimum vale fratribus relinqueret, cœpit disserere pauca sed fortia. . . . Multo plus diligo ut eruentes de tumulo tollentesque vobiscum ossa mea recedatis ab his locis, et ubicumque Deus providerit incolæ maneatis, quam ut ulla ratione consentientes iniquitati schismaticorum jugo colla subdatis. . . . Scio enim quia etsi quibusdam contemptibilis vixi, post meum tamen obitum, qualis fuerim, quam mea doctrina non sit contemnenda videbitis." — *Vita*, c. 39.

to come. When Cuthbert, then a bishop, came for the last time to Carlisle, to give the veil to Queen Ermenburga, Herbert seized the opportunity, and hastened to refresh himself at that fountain of eternal benefits which flowed for him from the holy and tender heart of his friend. "My brother," the bishop said to him, "you must ask me now all that you want to know, for we shall never meet again in this world." At these words Herbert fell at his feet in tears. "I conjure you," he cried, "do not leave me on this earth behind you; remember my faithful friendship, and pray God, that, after having served Him together in this world, we may pass into His glory together." Cuthbert threw himself on his knees at his friend's side, and after praying for some minutes, said to him, "Rise, my brother, and weep no more; God has granted to us that which we have both asked from Him." And in fact, though they never saw each other again here below, they died on the same day and at the same hour, the one in his isle bathed by the peaceable waters of a solitary lake, the other upon his granite rock fringed by the foam of the ocean; and their souls, says Bede, reunited by that blessed death, were carried together by the angels into the eternal kingdom.[56] This coincidence deeply touched the Christians of Northumbria, and was long engraven in their memory. Seven centuries later, in 1374, the Bishop of Carlisle appointed that a mass should be said, on the anniversary of the two saints, in the island where the Cumbrian anchorite died, and granted an indulgence of forty days to all who crossed the water to pray there in honor of the two friends.[57]

Contrast between Cuthbert and Wilfrid.

In all the histories of the saints, where shall we find a more complete contrast than that between Wilfrid and Cuthbert, though they were contemporaries, and devoted, from the bottom of their hearts, to the same cause? The life of Cuthbert, much shorter and less afflicted than that of Wilfrid, affords rest to the observer in the midst of the disturbances of a conflict to which,

[56] "In insula stagni illius pergrandis . . . jamdudum Cuthberchto spiritualis amicitiæ fœdere copulatus. . . . Dum sese alterutrum cœlestis sapientiæ poculis debriarent. . . . Memento, frater Hereberte, ut modo quidquid habes me interroges. . . . Obsecro per Dominum ne me deseras, sed tui memor sis fidissimi sodalis. . . . Unius ejusdemque momento temporis egredientes e corpore spiritus eorum, mox beata invicem visione conjuncti sunt, atque angelico ministerio pariter ad regnum translati cœleste." — *Vita*, c. 28.

[57] Eyre, p. 59. English readers will thank us for reminding them of the beautiful lines dedicated to our two saints by Wordsworth, a poet whose style

at the same time, he was not a stranger; but his part seems always to have been that of mediator and consoler. He liked better to persuade and to heal than to fight and vanquish. Besides Wilfrid, who is the saint of active life, of polemics, of publicity, of the struggle with kings, princes, and prelates, Cuthbert appears to us as the saint of nature, of a life retired and humble, of popular preaching, of solitude, and of prayer.

Notwithstanding this, the popularity of Cuthbert was immense, infinitely more general and more lasting than that of Wilfrid, or indeed of any other saint of his country and century. The Northumbrians listened with delight to the story of the pontiff who lived their own rustic and sea-faring life, a shepherd and a sailor by turns — who understood and had shared their occupations, their feelings, their necessities — who had taught them goodness by practising it himself, and truth by serving it without remission, but with a boundless charity.

While these recollections were engraved in the faithful memory of the laboring classes, kings, lords, and prelates

of expression does not always equal the nobility and purity of his inspiration, but who deserves to be better known than he is in France: —

"If thou, in the dear love of some one friend,
Hast been so happy that thou know'st what thoughts
Will sometimes, in the happiness of love,
Make the heart sink, then wilt thou reverence
This quiet spot; and, stranger, not unmoved,
Wilt thou behold this shapeless heap of stones —
The desolate ruins of St. Herbert's cell.
Here stood his threshold; here was spread the roof
That sheltered him, a self-secluded man,
After long exercises in social care
And offices humane, intent to adore
The Deity with undistracted mind,
And meditate on everlasting things
In utter solitude. But he had left
A fellow-laborer, whom the good man loved
As his own soul; and when, with eye upraised
To heaven, he knelt before the crucifix,
While o'er the lake the cataract of Lodore
Pealed to his orisons, and when he paced
Along the beach of this small isle, and thought
Of his companion, he would pray that both,
Now that their earthly duties were fulfilled,
Might die in the same moment. Nor in vain
So prayed he, as our chronicles report.
Though here the hermit numbered his last day,
Far from St. Cuthbert, his beloved friend,
These holy men both died in the same hour."

rivalled each other in demonstrations of respect and munificence to his relics and his spiritual posterity. All these different but equally persevering kinds of admiration produced an incredible amount of offerings, and especially gifts of land, made in his honor to the churches of Lindisfarne and Durham, in which successively he found a tomb. The words of Scripture were never more completely verified — "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Posthumous glory of St. Cuthbert.

It would require a volume to tell the history of the worship of St. Cuthbert and his relics, a history which, during many centuries, is mixed up with the history of the north of England, and sometimes takes the leading place in it.[58] The history of the various journeys made by the monks of Lindisfarne, in the ninth and tenth centuries, to take back from the Danes the corpse of their beloved saint, along with the skull of the martyr-king Oswald, would make of itself an *Odyssey* full of varied and curious episodes. This treasure at last found an asylum upon a steep platform formed like a horseshoe, covered with wood, and surrounded on three sides by a rapid river, where was built in 995, a chapel which took the name of Durham, and to which was afterwards transferred the episcopal and abbatial see. From this moment the name and memory of Cuthbert hovered over the magnificent Cathedral of Durham, one of the most beautiful in the world. This magnificent building, with its three stories of arched windows, its two towers, its five naves and two transepts, forms, with the ancient castle of the bishop, built by William the Conqueror, a monument at once of religion and art as admirable as it is little known. It can be compared only to Pisa, to Toledo, to Nuremberg, or Marienburg. It has even a great advantage over all these celebrated places, in the beauty of the landscape which encloses it. It is the sole existing example of a splendid cathedral situated in the midst of an old wood, and on the height of a rock, the abrupt descent of which is bathed by a narrow and rapid river.[59]

Translation to Durham.

[58] This volume actually exists; it has been compiled with great care and elegance by Mgr. Eyre, Catholic priest of Newcastle, under the title of *History of St. Cuthbert, with an Account of the Wanderings with his Body during* 124 *years, of the State of his Body until* 1542, *and of the various Monuments erected to his Memory* (London, 1862); and has very serviceable maps and plans. It contains the later history of Lindisfarne and of the Cathedral of Durham. Amongst other curious details we are told that a statue of the holy bishop, erected four centuries after his death, bore this inscription: "Sanctus Cuthbertus monachus, episcopus Lindisfarnensis, nunc patronus ecclesiæ ac libertatis Dunelmensis."

[59] I may draw attention to the view from the corner of Framwellgate Bridge

The extreme veneration with which the Saxon people surrounded the relics of St. Cuthbert made this church the best endowed in England. The humble anchorite, who had lived on his rock by the modest produce of his manual labor alone, thus created the richest benefice, after Toledo, in Christendom.

Cuthbert had vainly asked his monks to bury him upon his rock of Farne, in order to spare them the trouble caused by the criminals who would come to take refuge at his tomb.[60] The monks of Lindisfarne exposed themselves willingly to these importunate visitors, rather than deprive their church of what was to be its most precious treasure. After his translation to Durham, universal consent conferred in an ever increasing degree upon the sanctuary where his relics reposed a universally respected right of asylum. The ring of sculptured bronze attached to the door of the cathedral, which any pursued criminal or persecuted innocent had but to grasp in order to have part in the inviolability of the sanctuary, is still shown. The few who ventured to disregard this inviolability incurred celestial punishment, which increased the fame of the sanctuary. But the good saint did not wait until they had sought the shelter of his tomb to extend the hand of tutelary protection over the unhappy and the oppressed. The records of his church are rich in narratives of his miraculous interposition in behalf of the unfortunate victims of feudal tyranny, or of the too often arbitrary and pitiless justice of the middle ages.[61] The poor who

as one of the most picturesque and curious in Europe. The visitor must follow the shady avenue of oaks and beeches which skirts the left side of the horseshoe formed by the Wear opposite to that on which the cathedral stands. Those who know the little town of Semur in Auxois, with its castle and church built on a peninsula surrounded by the Armançon, may, by trebling the proportions of the landscape and its monuments, form an idea of the situation of Durham. Those who have visited Toledo, and recollect how the Tagus hollows out a bed for itself between two rocks and winds about the plateau on which is built the ancient capital of Spain, can still better imagine the site of Durham; but at Toledo the metropolitan church, buried among houses, does not equal the effect of the English cathedral; it lacks also the fine trees which surround the sanctuary of St. Cuthbert with so beautiful a girdle.

[60] "Vobis commodius esse arbitror ut hic requiescam propter incursionem profugorum vel noxiorum quos non libet: qui cum ad corpus meum forte confugerint, qui (qualiscumque sum) fama tamen exivit de me quia famulus Christi sum: necesse habetis sæpius pro talibus apud potentis sæculi intercedere idque ideo de præsentia corporis mei inultum tolerare laborem." — Bede, *Vita*, c. 37.

[61] See the curious anecdotes of the twelfth century, related by the monk Reginald in his *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus quæ*

invoked him saw the saint penetrate into the hideous dungeons where they were buried alive. At his voice their chains fell off, their instruments of torture were broken, and, like the angel who delivered St. Peter, Cuthbert led them to a safe place through the midst of sleeping jailers and closed doors.

He becomes the patron saint of Northumbria against internal oppression and foreign invasion.

But in this posthumous history of the holy abbot of Lindisfarne nothing is more singular or more touching than to see a man so humble, so modest, and so pacific, transformed into the patron saint, historical, warlike, and political, of all Northumbria, and that for six centuries at least after his death. It became a matter of pride to Northumbrian patriotism to sustain and demonstrate that Cuthbert was the most powerful intercessor produced by the Anglo-Saxon race, and that neither the glorious Queen Etheldreda nor the holy King St. Edmond, martyred by the Danes, nor St. Thomas of Canterbury himself, were so much listened to by God.[62] The principal Anglo-Saxon kings emulated each other in seeking his protection. The great King Alfred, when hidden in the marsh of Glastonbury, at the most critical moment of his struggle with the Danes, saw St. Cuthbert in a vision, who encouraged him, and promised him victory and the deliverance of his country. Canute, the great king of the Danes, when he became master of England, went barefooted to the tomb of Cuthbert, to pray there for the protection of the saint most venerated by the people he had just subdued. William the Conqueror himself, when he hastened to Durham to avenge the death of those Normans whom the inhabitants, intrenched in their sacred peninsula, had repulsed and slain, experienced a sort of supernatural impression before the tomb of the Anglo-Saxon saint, and respected the immunities on which

novellis patratæ sunt temporibus, which was written after the year 1172, at the request of the holy abbot Ælred of Rievaulx, and published for the first time by the Surtees Society in 1835. This collection is one of the most curious memorials of the religious and social condition of England in the twelfth century. Among a crowd of legends more or less fabulous, it contains many details equally original and authentic of the manners and institutions of the time. Side by side with great examples of sanctity and of habitual study of the Holy Scriptures, we find, both in lay and in religious life, scandals and excesses of tyranny which nothing could now make supportable in Western Europe, and which could only be reproduced under the dominion of the Czars.

[62] "Gloriosæ reginæ Etheldrithæ . . . tribus præcipuis Anglorum sanctis." — REGINALD, c. 19, 115.

the vassals of the bishopric plumed themselves in honor of their patron.[63]

In fact, the Norman Conquest did not in any way diminish the popularity of Cuthbert; Normans and Saxons were rivals for his protection. It is on record that an Anglo-Norman knight of the eleventh century returned from a pilgrimage to Rome, carrying the whole way, upon his bosom, a great piece of antique marble intended to decorate the altar of the holy bishop.[64]

Under the Anglo-Saxon monarchy Durham thus inherited at once all the veneration which attached to Lindisfarne, the cradle of faith and of the national Church of Northumbria — and to the personal memory of St. Cuthbert. Under the feudal royalty of the Plantagenets, the bishops who took special honor to themselves as his successors, succeeded in some degree in identifying themselves and their domains with him. Devotion to St. Cuthbert became so respected and so officially efficacious, that all that was given to them and all they acquired was legally invested with what was called, in the middle ages, *freedom* — that is to say, exemption from all taxes and all jurisdiction except that of the possessor. All the vast bishopric was considered the patrimony of St. Cuthbert, and bore his name. By reason of this privilege the bishops of Durham acquired by degrees all the attributes of royalty. They had a chancery, an admiralty, an exchequer, civil and criminal judges, the right of coining money, and in addition the defence and suzerainty of the English frontier against the Scotch.[65] It was in consequence of having wasted the lands of St. Cuthbert that King David of Scotland drew upon himself the terrible defeat known as the Battle of the Standard;[66] and it was upon a fief of the saint's patrimony, though enclosed by the diocese of York, that this decisive victory of the Anglo-Norman barons was gained.[67]

Two centuries after that great day, Normans and Saxons finally melted down into one nation, marched to battle against the Scots under the *vexillum Sancti Cuthberti*, which was no other than the corporal used by the prior of Lindisfarne to cover the chalice at mass, and which his pious admirers had

[63] Simeon Dunelmensis, c. 44.
[64] Reginald, c. 74.
[65] Camden's *Britannia*, Gough's ed., vol. iii. p. 109.
[66] See above, p. 446.
[67] Ricard. Hagulstad., pp. 82, 88, 93, Surtees edition.

taken the fancy of placing on the point of a lance, and carrying in place of a banner.[68] Edward III. was in France, where he had just won the battle of Crecy, and was besieging Calais. King David II. of Scotland, son of the illustrious Robert Bruce, had taken advantage of his absence to make a new invasion of Northumberland. He came as far as the walls of Durham at the head of thirty thousand Scots, whose devastations recalled only too distinctly those of their ancestors the Picts. The Queen of England, the generous Philippa of Hainault, led in her own person, to meet the enemy, an army inferior in number, but inspired by the idea of punishing the sacrilegious cruelty of the invaders. The Scots had not even respected the possessions and vassals of the abbey, which was still called the patrimony of St. Cuthbert. At the moment when the fight was about to begin, the prior of the monastery planted the standard of the saint upon a height near the field of battle, around which all the monks assembled in prayer. Victory pronounced itself for the English: their formidable archers, drawn specially from among the vassals of St. Cuthbert, made short work with the Scottish men-at-arms. The Scottish army was annihilated, and King David wounded and made prisoner along with his archbishop and the flower of his nobility. The next morning the victors, led by the chiefs of the two great chivalric houses of Norman Northumberland, the Nevilles and Percies, carried back to the monastic cathedral, along with the banners taken from the Scots, the precious relic they had borrowed. It reappeared in many battles, always assuring victory to the English, up to the reign of Henry VIII. The last time that this holy banner appeared on a field of battle was again in

Battle of Neville's Cross. 17th Oct., 1346.

[68] Reginald, *De Virtutibus*, c. 39. See also Bolland., p. 127, for another curious instance of the protection given by St. Cuthbert against the Scotch in 1297, from whence Camden derived his saying — "Anglorum reges et proceres credidisse S. Cuthbertum contra Scottos tutelarum divum fuisse." Walter Scott, always so skilful in invoking the poetical and religious traditions of the Scottish Marches, has not passed over this one: —

> "Who may his miracles declare?
> Even Scotland's dauntless king, and heir, . . .
> Before his standard fled.
> 'Twas he, to vindicate his reign,
> Edged Alfred's falchion on the Dane,
> And turned the Conqueror back again,
> When with his Norman bowyer band
> He came to waste Northumberland."
>
> — *Marmion*, canto ii. 15.

the hands of the Nevilles and Percies, in the glorious but ill-fated insurrection of the Northumbrians against the atrocious tyranny of Henry VIII. in 1536.[69] This insurrection, known under the name of the *Pilgrimage of Grace*, in favor of the religion which the saints of Lindisfarne had brought into Northumbria, and which the miserable husband of Anne Boleyn wished to destroy, ended only in the massacre of the rural population, and in the judicial murder of the principal nobles and priests of the country — among others, of the last successor of St. Wilfrid at Hexham. Under the reign of this *Defender of the Faith* the standard of St. Cuthbert had the same fate as his body, which up to that time had remained uncorrupted. These holy remains, along with the bones of the venerable Bede, were torn from the shrine in which they had been venerated by so many grateful generations; and the noble banner was also torn from the sanctuary and thrown into the fire by the wife of an apostate priest.[70]

[69] Raine's *Priory of Hexham*. Appendix, p. 136, notes 141, 150. The instruction of Henry VIII. to the Duke of Norfolk, as to the punishment of rebels, may be read p. 151. They direct that *a good number* of the inhabitants of every city, village, and hamlet shall be hanged and quartered, and, above all, as many priests and canons as possible are without ceremony *to be tyed uppe*. It reads like the instructions of the Committee of Public Safety to the Terrorist generals in La Vendée.

[70] The shocking details of this profanation, with an extremely curious description of the ancient usages of the great Cathedral of Durham before the Reformation, are to be found in a rare volume, entitled *The Ancient Rites and Monuments of the Monastical and Cathedral Church of Durham*. By J. D. (Davies), of Kidevelly; London, 1672, in 8vo.

James Raine, an Anglican writer whose erudition is clouded by his bigoted prejudices against the religion and the times which he has studied, affirms that at the opening of the tomb of St. Cuthbert in 1827 his body was discovered, together with his garments, comb, and other objects represented in the illustrations of a work entitled *St. Cuthbert, with an Account of the State in which his Remains were found upon the opening of his Tomb in Durham Cathedral in the year* 1827. By James Raine, rector of Meldon; Durham, 1828, in 8vo. The authenticity of this discovery is denied by Mgr. Eyre, according to whom the body of the saint is deposited in a hiding-place, the secret of which is known only to three English Benedictines!

The British Museum now contains the most ancient monument consecrated to the honor of the great Northumbrian saint — the Gospel called St. Cuthbert's. This celebrated MS. was the gift of Sir Robert Cotton, 1631. It was written between 700 and 720 by two bishops of Lindisfarne, Eadfreth and Ethelwold, and illuminated by the latter. The monk Betfreth enriched it with gilding and precious stones. It has a Northumbrian glossary of the end of the ninth century, interlined by a priest, Aldred — "bonæ mulieris filius eximius." The whole four, according to a final note, "Deo et Cuthberto construxerunt vel ornaverunt." It is a most curious monument of Irish art. According to Sir Frederick Madden, it bears all the marks of this special and extremely elegant art. It is discussed at length in an essay by Dr. Reeve, entitled *On Early Irish Calligraphy*, 1860, in 4to.

Less dazzling and less universal, but not less lasting, was the popularity of the holy Bishop of Lindisfarne with the seafaring population of the Northumbrian shores. This is apparent through all the different narratives which remain to us concerning the worship of which he was the object during so many centuries, and which throw a precious light upon the ideas, manners, and belief of the ancient English people. But let us state, in the first place, that all the monks of that district were, like Cuthbert, bold and unwearied sailors. There are no more interesting recollections of their life than those which show them to us in constant conflict with the element on which England has established her dominion. In that point, as in all else, the monks show themselves in history the pioneers of the Anglo-Saxon race. It is pleasant to see them sounding a prelude, as it were, by their courage and address, to the exploits of the most maritime nation in the world.

Popularity of St. Cuthbert on sea as on land.

Sailor monks.

"Rule, Britannia! Britannia, rule the waves!"

The narratives of the seventh century are full of the cruel tempests which reigned upon the east coast of England, still one of the shores most abounding in shipwrecks.[71] But no danger stopped the sons of those bold sailors who owed the conquest of Great Britain to their experience of the sea. The Anglo-Saxon monks, under the frock and scapular, wore hearts which did not yield either in vigor or activity to any of their ancestors or countrymen. They coasted continually between the different monasteries and their dependencies, which extended along that coast bristling with rocks and reefs. Sometimes the furious waves drove them out to sea, out of sight of land, sometimes held them shut up in some desert isle or solitary bay for whole days and weeks. Then, as soon as the wind fell, they put out again to encounter new dangers in their miserable barks, rocked on the crest of

[71] "En tellus nivibus, nebulis cœlum horrescit, aer flatibus adversis furit, fluctibus æquor . . . manente triduo tempestate prævalida. . . . Exorta subito tempestas fera, omnem eis naviganda facultatem abstulit . . . septem dies fervente unda conclusi, tristes in insula resederunt . . . quinque diebus obstitit tempestas ne redire possemus." — *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 11, 36, 37. "Ecce subito, positis in medio maris . . . tanta ingruit tempestatis hiems ut neque velo neque remigio quicquam proficere valeremus. . . . Cumque diu cum vento pelagoque frustra certantes tandem post terga respiceremus . . . invenimus nos undique versum par tempestate præclusos." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. i.

the waves like sea-gulls. They were compared to sea-birds by those who from the shore saw them struggling against the storm: and it was under this aspect that they appeared for the first time to Cuthbert, when in his youth, before he became a monk, he witnessed, in the midst of a mocking and hostile crowd, the fruitless efforts of the monks of Tynemouth to effect a landing, against wind and tide, with the wood for building, which they were carrying to their monastery in five little boats.[72] The prayer of Cuthbert saved them, and brought them happily into port, where their brethren awaited them, all kneeling in a mass upon a point of rock which projected into the raging waves, to implore from heaven the safety of their companions.

Cuthbert, when a child, sees them like sea-birds on the waves.

When Cuthbert himself became a monk, his duties as missionary and prior, and afterward his prolonged sojourn upon the isle of Farne, familiarized him with all the dangers and habits of that seafaring existence which was so closely associated with monastic life. This recollection, joined to the popular glory of his name, gave him the place of patron saint to the poor seamen condemned to gain their bread by braving daily that stormy sea. Late in the twelfth century it was still told among them how, in the midst of the hurricane, the sailors in extremity saw the holy bishop of Lindisfarne appear in the midst of them, with his mitre on his head and his crosier in his hand, which he used sometimes as a helm, sometimes as an oar, sometimes as a grappling-iron, to save them from shipwreck, and bring them to a place of safety: no one dared to ask him his name, for all recognized, by the sheen of his beautiful and gentle countenance, the tender-hearted pontiff whom they had all been taught to venerate from their infancy as the protector of the country and of the coast.[73] It occurred to no one in those days to doubt the reality of such an apparition. For all the nations of Christendom at this period there was nothing more natural than the supernatural. It was only a

His appearance to lost sailors.

[72] "Quod videntes e monasterio fratres, emissis in fluvium naviculis, eos qui in ratibus laborabant adjuvare nitebantur. . . . Sed vi fluminis et violentia ventorum superati, nequaquam valebunt. . . . Collecti in proximo obice flectebant genua . . . adeo ut quasi quinque aves parvulæ, quinque rates undis insidentes apparuerent." — *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 3.

[73] "Cuthbertus, quasi in specie corporali, omnibus visibilis et palpabilis apparuit, et in prora navis, gubernatoris de more, resedit. . . . Baculo pastorali de modo gubernaculi, pontem sævientem secando dividebat." — Regi-NALDUS, *De Virtutibus S. Cuthberti*, c. 23.

more frequent and more direct intervention of the omnipotence of God, which appalled them or consoled them, but did not surprise.

In this dangerous archipelago, and on the precipitous island where Cuthbert had his favorite dwelling and where he died, he had more than one successor ambitious of following his holy footsteps in the same spot where he had best known and served his God. The first of these was a monk of Ripon called Ethelwold, who, more effectually moved by the example of Cuthbert than by the lessons of Wilfrid, lived for twelve years in the cell of his holy predecessor, the opening of which he attempted to close against the wind and rain by clay, hay, and finally by a hide, that he might not be troubled in his contemplations.[74] But when the moaning of the wind and the waves, which broke against the basaltic precipices of his isle, warned him of coming calamity, he issued from his shelter to hasten to the aid of the shipwrecked; and the sailors, driven in the midst of storm, saw him kneeling on the summit of his rock with his hands raised to heaven imploring from God the salvation of his brethren.[75]

The hermit Ethelwold prays for the shipwrecked. 687–695.

The Anglo-Saxon anchorite thus set up before God and man, on his unknown isle, and in the depths of an unknown age, a touching and glorious symbol of the everlasting part played by his fellow-monks, always ready to lavish upon Christians treasures of intercession, and to encounter public plagues and perils, as well as those temptations and tempests of the soul of which the waves in fury are but an imperfect image.

It is pleasant to connect with this old saint of the past a Christian heroine of our own days, the young and touching figure of Grace Darling, who came from the very isle of Cuthbert and Ethelwold to expose her life on behalf of the shipwrecked — as if that wild and threatening coast had been pre-

Grace Darling, the Christian heroine of the same archipelago in the nineteenth century.

[74] "Sumto fœno, vel argilla, vel quicquid hujusmodi materiæ reperisset, stipaverat rimulas, ne quotidianis imbrium sive ventorum injuriis ab orandi retardaretur instantia. . . . Pelliculam vituli in angulo, quod et ipse et prædecessor Cuthbertus sæpius orans stare vel genuflectere solebat, clavis affixam violentiis procellarum opposuit." — *Vita S. Cuthberti*, c. 46.

[75] "Ubi longius visum levavimus, vidimus in ipsa insula Farne, egressum de latibulis suis amatissimum Deo patrem iter nostrum inspicere. Audito fragore procellarum ac ferventis Oceani, exierat videre quid nobis accideret, cumque nos in labore ac desperatione positos cerneret, flectebat genua." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 1.

destined by God up to our own time to be at once the locality and the witness of the noblest deeds of charity. Grace was the daughter of the keeper of one of those lighthouses which modern science has raised upon the group of isles between Lindisfarne and Bamborough. One night, in the midst of a terrible storm, she was awoke by the cries of the crew of a great ship which had gone ashore on a neighboring reef. She awoke her father, and alone with him, oar in hand, in a frail boat, she rushed to the help of the perishing. The sea had never been more furious, nor the difficulty and danger of managing a boat greater. After desperate efforts, she at last reached the rock to which clung the last survivors of the crew. They were but nine in number, all of whom she took into her boat. The rage of the waves and violence of the wind were such that it took almost an entire day to row them back to the lighthouse, where she harbored and cared for them for three days and nights. All England burst into a unanimous transport of enthusiasm on learning this heroic act; and from the royal palace to the smallest village all echoed her praise. She was only twenty, and was no doubt already attacked by the pulmonary disease of which she died four years afterwards. She died without any desire to leave her father and her island, leaving only a name worthy of eternal recollection, worthy to be inscribed among the heroes and saints. In Anglo-Saxon times she would have been canonized by the popular voice, as were all the saints whose history we record; and her place would have been fixed between Hilda and Ebba, the two great abbesses of her race and country, whose profaned altars and forgotten fame still hallow in the north and south the historic region which Grace Darling has lighted up with a modern and touching glory.[76]

5th Sept., 1838.

1842.

[76] The ship wrecked upon the reefs of Longstone Island was a steamboat called the Forfarshire. Grace Darling's lighthouse is situated upon the isle called Longstone or Outer Farne. See the fine notice of this incident given by M. Alphonse Esquiros in one of his excellent articles upon England and English life (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1864), and for the localities Cruchley's excellent *Reduced Ordnance Map*, No. 62. Grace Darling's father died in May, 1865. He is buried beside his daughter, who rests in the cemetery at Bamborough, upon the site of the ancient capital of those Northumbrian kings of whom we have spoken so much. The monument raised by a national subscription to this young heroine of Christian charity is visible at sea a great distance off.

CHAPTER II.

ST. BENEDICT BISCOP, AND THE MONASTERIES OF WEARMOUTH AND YARROW.

Benedict Biscop represents science and art, as Wilfrid represents public, and Cuthbert spiritual, life. — His birth and conversion. — His four first expeditions to Rome. — He gains the heart of King Egfrid. — Foundation of Wearmouth. — He brings masons and glassmakers from France. — His fifth and sixth visits to Rome, from which he brings back many relics, books, and pictures. — Important works of painting in the new monasteries. — A Roman abbot teaches liturgical music to all the Northumbrian monasteries, and assures himself of the orthodoxy of the English clergy in respect to the heresy of the Monothelites. — Foundation of Yarrow. — Fraternal union of the two monasteries in imitation of their patrons Saints Peter and Paul. — Benedict takes his nephew Easterwine as his coadjutor. — The occupations of a Saxon noble transformed into a monk. — Death of Easterwine. — Severe illness of Benedict. — His last injunctions. — His touching death by the side of his dying coadjutor. — After him Ceolfrid, the son of an ealdorman, disciple of Wilfrid and Botulph, governs the two monasteries. — History of Botulph, the founder of Boston and apostle of the Benedictine order. — Ceolfrid, as abbot, takes great pains to increase the libraries. — He makes an exchange of a book for an estate with the King of Northumbria. — His desire to die at Rome. — Grief of the six hundred monks who accompanied him to the spot where he embarked. — Their letter to the Pope. — He is able to go only as far as Langres, where he dies. — How Christianity taught the barbarous Saxons to love each other.

A THIRD saint, whose name has been already mentioned in this record, comes in between Wilfrid and Cuthbert, Benedict Biscop, the companion of Wilfrid in his first journey to Rome, and during the last half of his life the neighbor of Cuthbert, whom he followed closely to the tomb. In the retirement of the cloister, and, so to speak, in private life, Benedict held the position which Wilfrid held in public life, as the champion of Roman unity and propagation of the Benedictine rule. He represents, besides, in the monastic constellation of the seventh century, intelligence, art, and science, as Cuthbert represents the gift of preaching and ascetic life. His fame was less than that of Wilfrid, and, with still greater reason, less than that of Cuthbert; but he has, notwithstanding,

Benedict Biscop, the representative of art and science as Wilfrid was of public, and Cuthbert of spiritual, life.

won a noble place in the annals of the Anglo-Saxon Church. We find various features in his life which do honor to his soul, and which are not without interest in the history of human intelligence.

Birth and conversion of Benedict Biscop. 628.

Benedict was born, like Wilfrid, but several years before him, of the highest Anglo-Saxon nobility.[77] While he was still very young, he held an office in the household of King Oswy, who, according to the customs of the new-born feudalism, invested him with a fief taken from the national property, and proportioned to the importance of his office.[78] At twenty-five he gave up secular life, marriage, and his family, restored his lands to the king, and dedicated himself to the service of God. Before he settled in any community he went to Rome, where he had been long attracted by that desire of paying his vows at the tombs of the apostles which became so general among the Anglo-Saxons. It has been seen, in the history of Wilfrid,[79] how, after beginning their journey together, the two young Northumbrian nobles separated at Lyons, and how Benedict, after his first visit to Rome, returned there a second and third time, having in the meantime assumed the monastic habit in the island of Lerins, a monastery which had just entered into the family of St. Benedict. It may also be remembered that Pope Vitalinus, struck with the piety and knowledge of so constant and zealous a pilgrim, assigned him as guide and interpreter to the Greek Theodore, who undertook, at the age of sixty-seven, to take the place of St. Augustin, and who retained his Anglo-Saxon guide with him for two years, transforming him from a monk of Lerins into the abbot of the principal monastery in Canterbury.[80]

653.

His journeys to Rome.

669.

After thus spending two years with the new archbishop, the Abbot Benedict, instead of revisiting his native district, went for the fourth time to Rome. He was then in the prime of life; but when it is considered what were the difficulties and dangers of such a journey at such a time — when we remember that a journey from London to

671.

[77] Wilfrid's historian informs us that his true name was Baduging: we have no information why he took the name of Benedict, under which he is generally known, nor whence came his surname of Biscop, since he was never a bishop.

[78] "Nobili stirpe gentis Anglorum progenitus . . . cum esset minister Oswii regis, et possessionem terræ suo gradui competentem, illo donante, perciperet." — BEDE, *Vitæ Abbatum in Wiramutha et Girvum*, c. 1.

[79] See above, p. 308.

[80] St. Peter's, since called St. Augustin's.

Rome was then twice as long as and a hundred times more dangerous than a journey from London to Australia is now — we are amazed at the resolution and energy which then, as ever since, has induced so many Christians, and especially so many Anglo-Saxon monks, not once only, but many times in their life, to cross the sea and the Alps on their way to Rome. His fourth expedition was undertaken in the interests of literature. He brought back from it a rich cargo of books, partly sold, partly given to him; and in passing by Vienna, the ancient capital of the Gauls, on his return, he brought with him many more, which he had deposited there in the charge of his friends.[81] When he returned at length to his native Northumbria he sought King Egfrid, the son of his former master, then the reigning monarch, and told him all he had done during the twenty years which had passed since he left his country and the royal service. Then, endeavoring to communicate to him the religious ardor with which his own heart was filled, he explained to the king all he had learned, at Rome and elsewhere, of ecclesiastical and monastic discipline, showing him the books and relics which he had brought back. Egfrid, who had not yet begun his unfortunate struggle with Wilfrid, allowed himself to be won by the stories of the pilgrim, for whom he conceived a great affection; and in order that he might apply his experience to the government of a new community, he detached from his own possessions, and presented to Benedict, an estate large enough to feed seventy families, and give occupation to seventy ploughs, according to the mode of calculating the value of land among the Anglo-Saxons.[82]

He gains the heart of King Egfrid.

The estate was situated at the mouth of the Wear, a little stream which flows through Durham, and throws itself into the Northern Sea a little south of the Tyne. This gave the name of Wearmouth to the new monastery, which was consecrated to St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, according to the express wish of Egfrid, in

Foundation of Wearmouth. 673-675.

[81] "Libros omnis divinæ eruditionis non paucos, vel placito pretio emptos, vel amicorum dono largitos retulit. . . . Emptitios ibi quos apud amicos commendaverat, recepit." — *Vitæ Abbat.*, c. 4.

[82] "Confestim ei terram LXX. familiarum de suo largitus." — *Ibid.* Commentators suppose that Bede intended to indicate under the word *familia* the space of ground otherwise called a *hide* or *carrucata* — that is to say, he portion of land which could be cultivated by one plough in the space of a year.

agreement with that of Benedict as an evidence of his leanings towards Rome.[83]

He brings masons and glass-makers from France.

This foundation was no sooner assured than the unwearied Benedict took ship again, to seek in France *cæmentarii*, like those whom Wilfrid brought about the same time from Canterbury. As soon as they arrived he set them to work in building a stone church, in the Roman style, for everything that came from Rome was dear to him. It was in honor of St. Peter that he undertook this work, and it was carried on with so much energy that, a year after the first stone was laid, the church was roofed in and mass celebrated under one of those stone arches which excited the surprise and admiration of the English of the seventh century. He brought glassmakers also from France, for there were none in England; and these foreign workmen, after having put glass into the windows of the church and new monastery, taught their art to the Anglo-Saxons.[84]

Renewed expeditions to Rome. 678.

Animated by a zeal which nothing could discourage, and inspired by intelligent patriotism, and a sort of passion for beauty in art, which shrank neither from fatigue nor care,[85] he sent to seek beyond the seas all that he could not find in England — all that seemed

[83] There are two distinct ecclesiastical sites at the mouth of the Wear — on the north, Monk-Wearmouth, where Benedict Biscop's monastery was situated; and Bishop-Wearmouth, on the south, which owes its origin to the bishops of Durham. Both are swallowed up in the town of Sunderland, situated on the east of Bishop-Wearmouth, on the sea, which is now one of the principal seaports in England.

Wearmouth has become at the present time one of the chief centres of the collieries, and also of those hideous evils which lately excited, thanks to the zeal of Lord Shaftesbury, the consternation and horror of England. See the Parliamentary discussions of 1842. There are no more *lazy monks* to feed the poor population; but there existed up to 1842 a crowd of women and girls, almost naked, who worked among the men, for fourteen hours successively, sixteen hundred feet below the surface of the earth, and at a temperature of about ninety degrees. — *Report from the Select Committee*, 1841, p. 4. Let us add with pleasure, that a humane legislation has since then applied remedies to the revolting abuses thus brought to a salutary publicity.

[84] "Cæmentarios qui lapideam sibi ecclesiam juxta Romanorum quem semper amabat morem facerent, postulavit, accepit, attulit. . . . Misit legatarios Galliam, qui vitri factores, artifices videlicet Britanniis eatenus ignotos ad cancellandas ecclesiæ, porticuumque et cænaculorum ejus fenestras addicerent. . . . Anglorum ex eo gentem hujusmodi artificium nosse ac discere fecerunt." — *Vitæ Abbat.*, c. 5. I believe that this, and the instance before quoted of Wilfrid, are the first known examples of the use of glass windows. There is, however, no evidence that these windows were colored.

[85] "Quippe studio advehendi cognatis aliquod insolitum amor patræ, et voluptas elegantiæ asperos fallebat labores." — Will. Malmesb., *De Gest. Reg.*, i. 54.

necessary to him for the ornamentation of his church; and not finding even in France all he wanted, he went for the fifth time to Rome. Even this was not his last visit, for some years later he made a sixth pilgrimage.[85] On both occasions he brought treasures back with him, chiefly books in countless quantities and of every kind. He was a passionate collector, as has been seen, from his youth. He desired each of his monasteries to possess a great library, which he considered indispensable to the instruction, discipline, and good organization of the community; and reckoned upon the books as the best means of retaining his monks in their cloisters; for much as he loved travelling himself, he did not approve of other monks passing their time on the highways and byways, even under pretext of pilgrimages.[87] 685.

Important paintings in his new monasteries.

Along with the books he brought relics, not alone for his own community, but for other churches in England, and a great number of pictures and colored images. By introducing these images from Rome into Northumberland, Benedict Biscop has written one of the most curious, and, at the same time, forgotten pages in the history of art. It is apparent that Rome was then the grand reservoir not only of tradition, but also of graphic or symbolic representations for the instruction and edification

[86] In speaking of these two last journeys, Bede says *quarta* and *quinta vice*, because he counts only the departures from England — *De Britannia* ad Romam accurrens." But he himself explains that during the second absence of Benedict Biscop, from 665 to 667, he made two pilgrimages to Rome — the one before, the other after his visit to Lerins. We add a chronological summary of the life of Benedict Biscop: —

628. Birth.
653. He gives up secular life, and goes to Rome for the first time.
665. His second journey to Rome: he becomes a monk at Lerins.
667. Third journey to Rome.
669. He returns with the Archbishop Theodore, and becomes Abbot of St. Peter's, at Canterbury.
671. Fourth journey to Rome.
672. Return by Vienna, where he recovers his books.
674. Foundation of Wearmouth.
676. Journey to France in search of artists.
678. Fifth journey to Rome.
682. Foundation of Yarrow. He takes Easterwine as his coadjutor.
684. Sixth journey to Rome.
686. Death of Easterwine. Return of Benedict.
690. His death.

[87] "Innumerabilem librorum omnis generis copiam. . . . Bibliothecam quam de Roma nobilissimam et copiosissimam advexerat ad instructionem ecclesiæ necessariam. . . . Bibliothecam utriusque monasterii quam magna instantia cepit." — *Vitæ*, c. 6, 9, 14. Cf. *Homil. in Natale Benedicti Abbatis*, t. vii. col. 465, and LINGARD, *Antiquities*, t. ii. p. 129.

of the faithful, the first outlines of which, traced in the Catacombs by the tombs of the martyrs, began to reappear in the great mosaics which still decorate the apses of the primitive churches in Rome. The Venerable Bede, who speaks with enthusiasm of the expeditions of his master and friend, leads us to suppose that these were portable pictures, which could only have been painted on wood; but it may be supposed that the Abbot of Wearmouth brought back with him both painters and mosaic-workers, to work on the spot at the decoration of his churches. How can it be otherwise explained how pictures on wood, brought even by water from Rome to England, should have been large enough to cover the walls and arches of the two or three churches of which Bede speaks?

However this may be, the result was that the most ignorant of the Christians of Northumbria found on entering these new monastic churches, under a material form, the attractive image of the instructions which the monastic missionaries lavished on them. Learned and unlearned could contemplate and study with delight, here the sweet and attractive figure of the new-born Saviour, there the twelve apostles surrounding the Blessed Virgin; upon the northern wall all the parables of the Gospels, upon the southern the visions of the Apocalypse; elsewhere a series of pictures which marked the harmony between the Old and New Testaments; Isaac carrying the wood for his sacrifice opposite to Jesus bearing His cross: the brazen serpent opposite Jesus crucified, and so on.[88] When we discover these details in the decoration

[88] This passage, so important for decorative art, is as follows: "Picturas imaginum sanctarum quas ad ornandam ecclesiam quam construxerat, detulit; magnam videlicet B. M. V., etc., . . . quibus medium ejusdem ecclesiæ testudinem, ducto a pariete ad parietem tabulato præcingeret; imagines evangelicæ historiæ quibus australem ecclesiæ parietem decoraret; imagines . . . quibus septentrionalem æque parietem ornaret, quatenus intrantes ecclesiam omnes etiam literarum ignari, quaqua versum intenderent, vel semper amabilem Christi sanctorumque ejus . . . contemplarentur aspectum." — C. G. Further on, when speaking of the fruits of his sixth and last journey to Rome: "Nam et tunc (attulit) dominicæ historiæ picturas quibus totam B. Dei Genitricis, quam in monasterio majore fecerat, ecclesiam in gyro coronaret: imagines quoque ad ornandum monasterium ecclesiamque B. Pauli Apostoli de concordia Veteris et Novi Testamenti summa ratione compositas exhibuit, etc." These last words apply to the second monastery founded at Yarrow, of which we have yet to speak. Thus it is apparent that the abbot Benedict Biscop had undertaken to decorate these churches — that of St. Peter at Wearmouth, St. Paul at Yarrow, and a third dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, *in majore monasterio*, which may have been only the choir or apsis of the first.

of the Northumbrian monasteries twelve hundred years ago, we cannot but bethink ourselves that our own century, in two memorable instances, has reproduced this sublime thought: at Spires, in the vast cathedral which the munificence of the King of Bavaria has raised out of its ruins; and at Paris in the venerable Basilica of St. Germain des Prés, where our attention was attracted for the last time by the pencil of Flandrin, and from which a last lustre has been thrown upon talent so pure, so elevated, so serene, so naturally devoted to the service of the eternal truth. His name, though modern, like that of Ozanam, does not seem displaced amid the recollections of the saints and monuments of Christian antiquity!

He brings with him a Roman abbot, who teaches liturgical music to all the Northumbrian monasteries.

After Latin and Greek books, after what was then called literature and philosophy, after architecture and art, it was the turn of music — of the art which above all others is liturgic and monastic. On his return from his fifth voyage, Benedict brought back with him from Rome an eminent monk called John, precentor of St. Peter's, and abbot of St. Martin's at Rome, to establish at Wearmouth the music and Roman ceremonies with entire exactitude, and according to the practice of the Basilica of St. Peter at Rome. As soon as he had arrived at Wearmouth, this learned abbot set out in writing the order of the celebration of feasts for all the year, of which he soon circulated numerous copies. Then he opened classes, at which he taught, *viva voce*, the liturgy and ecclesiastical chants. The best singers of the Northumbrian monasteries came to listen to him, and invited him to visit their communities.[89]

It was thus that Benedict Biscop drew from Rome, and spread throughout the soil of his country, by many different channels, the instructions and traditions of art consecrated by religion. History, it seems to us, offers few pages better adapted to refresh and console the soul than that on which the mother and sovereign Church is thus seen to open her protecting bosom to nations scarcely yet issued from the night of paganism, and to reveal to them, by the hands of her monastic ministers and missionaries, not only the mysteries of faith and the laws of morality, but also the pleasures of the mind and the beauties of art.

[89] "Ritum canendi ac legendi viva voce præfati monasterii cantores edocendo. . . . De omnibus pene ejusdem provinciæ monasteriis ad audiendum eum, qui cantandi erant periti, confluebant." — *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 18.

The passionate zeal of our abbot for the building and decoration of his monastic houses did not make him forget the more essential interests of his foundations. Before leaving Rome, he took care to constitute his community upon the immovable basis of the rule of St. Benedict.[90] He obtained from Pope Agathon a charter which guaranteed the liberty and security of the new Monastery of Wearmouth, as Wilfrid did for his favorite Abbey of Hexham, and perhaps at an even earlier date. But far from requiring this guarantee against the King of Northumbria, as his old friend did, Bede takes care to prove that the pontifical grant was asked and obtained with the consent, and even at the desire, of Egfrid, and was confirmed in a public assembly by the king and bishops.[91] From the time of their first separation at Lyons, Benedict seems always to have kept at a distance from Wilfrid, and no appearance of sympathy for the trials of the great persecuted bishop appears to him. Notwithstanding, they served the same cause, and inspired the Pope at least with equal confidence. Agathon gave a wonderful mark of this confidence to Benedict Biscop, by making his monastery the centre of the mission with which he had charged the precentor of St. Peter's, the object of which was to establish the orthodoxy of the English bishops and clergy in respect to the heresy of the Monothelites.[92]

[90] "Post compositum juxta regulam monasterium, profectione completa." — C. 6.

[91] "Non vile munus attulit . . . epistolam privilegii . . . cum licentia, consensu, desiderio et hortatu Egfridi regis . . . qua monasterium ab omni prorsus extrinseca irruptione tutum perpetuo redderetur ac liberum . . . quod Britannias perlatum et coram synodo patefactum." — *Vitæ Abbat.*, c. 6, 12, and *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 18.

[92] This mission seems to indicate on the part of the Pontiff a certain distrust of Theodore. As has been already seen, Pope Vitalianus, in conferring on him the dignity of Metropolitan of England, joined to him the Abbot Adrian and Benedict Biscop himself, lest his nationality as a Greek might make him accessible to the errors of the Monothelites who then desolated the Church. At a later period, Agathon charged Abbot John, precentor of St. Peter's, to examine exactly into the faith of the Church of England, and to make his report at Rome. The pontifical envoy was present at the Council of Heathfield, called by the Archbishop Theodore (17th September, 680), where the Church of England made her confession of orthodox faith, and declared her acceptance of the five general councils, and that of St. Martin. Abbot John carried with him a copy of the acts of this council, to submit it to the Pope, and on the other hand gave the acts of the council of the Pope St. Martin to St. Benedict Biscop's monastery to be copied. He died before he could return to Rome, and his body was carried to St.-Martin-de-Tours, which he had visited on his way to England, on account of his great devotion to that saint, of whom his monastery in Rome bore the name.

King Egfrid, who was then at the height of his struggle with Wilfrid, seems to have been anxious to make up, to his own conscience and that of his Catholic people, for his violence towards the Bishop of York, by the intimacy of his relations with the two other great monks of his kingdom, the anchorite Cuthbert and the abbot Benedict. In order to give the latter a new mark of sympathy and protection, he assigned to him another estate, not so great as that of Wearmouth, for it could support only forty families, but so near to the first that it seemed possible to unite the two gifts, and make of them one vast patrimony. This was the cradle of the Monastery of Yarrow, the name of which is inseparably linked with that of the Venerable Bede. Yarrow was situated a little to the north of the Monastery of Wearmouth, in a similar position, at the mouth of a river, the Tyne, which there falls into the Northern Sea, after following a course parallel to that of the Wear, and was dedicated to the Apostle St. Paul, as Wearmouth was to the Apostle St. Peter. The thought which inspired Biscop of establishing the spirit and image of Rome upon this Northumbrian shore, already sweet with the perfume of monastic flowers is everywhere apparent.[93] He wanted a reproduction of St. Paul's outside the Walls, at a certain distance from his Saxon copy of St. Peter of the Vatican. Although he had appointed one of his most intimate friends and fellow-pilgrims, Ceolfrid, abbot of the new foundation, Benedict's intention was to make only one community of the two houses, in sign of the fraternal union which he longed to see reigning among them, and which should be suggested to them by the example of the two glorious apostles whom he had given to them as patrons.

Foundation of Yarrow. 682.

Fraternal union of the two houses after the example of their patrons St. Peter and St. Paul.

In order to be more at liberty to devote his time to travel, as well as to be more at the disposal of the king, who continually sought his presence and counsels,[94] Benedict took a coadjutor in the government of his first Monastery of Wear-

He takes his nephew, Easterwine, for his coadjutor. 682-686.

[93] "Plaga olim et suave halantibus monasteriorum floribus dulcis, et urbium a Romanis ædificatarum frequentia renidens." — GUILL. MALMESB., *De Gest. Reg.*, i. 9, 54.

[94] I borrow this detail from another Life of Benedict and Ceolfrid, which, if not written by Bede, has evidently furnished him with information, which he has repeated literally; it is to be found in the *Opera Minora*, and has been reprinted by Dr. Giles in the Appendix of his excellent edition of Bede, vol. vi. pp. 416–42.

mouth. This new abbot was his nephew, and, like Ceolfrid, one of his most devoted companions.[95] His name was Easterwine. He was younger than Benedict by twenty-two years, and, like him, of high birth; for it was the descendants of the noblest races of Northumbria who filled the monasteries, giving themselves up to occupations the most unlike those of their ancestors — to manual or literary work, to prayer and penitence. He had been, like Benedict, a soldier in the warlike household of King Egfrid. At twenty-one he had given up everything, to enter into the community formed by his uncle at Wearmouth; nor did the one dream of asking, nor the other of offering, any exemption from the charges and observances of religious life, on account of relationship or nobility. The noble youth took pride only in following minutely the rule and occupations of the house, like any other monk. Thanks to his illustrious biographer, we know what the occupations of a Saxon thane turned monk were in the seventh century. His duties were — to thrash and winnow the corn, to milk the goats and cows, to take his turn in the kitchen, the bakehouse, and the garden, always humble and joyous in his obedience. When he became coadjutor, and was invested, in Benedict's absence, with all his authority, the young abbot continued the course of communal life; and when his duties as superior led him out of doors to where the monks labored in the fields, he set to work along with them, taking the plough or the fan in his own hands, or forging iron upon the anvil. He was robust as well as young and handsome; but his look was infinitely gentle, and his conversation full of amiability.[96] When he was compelled to reprove a fault, it was done with such tender sadness that the culprit felt himself incapable of any new offence which should bring a cloud over the benign brightness of that beloved face. His table was served with the same provisions as that of the monks; and he slept in the general dormitory,

[95] "Ut quem solus non poterat laborem, socia dilectissimi commilitonis virtute levius ferret." — *Vitæ Abbat.*, c. 6.

[96] "Vir nobilis, sed insigne nobilitatis non ad jactantiæ materiem, ut quidam, despectumque aliorum, sed ad majorem, ut Dei servum decet, animi nobilitatem convertens. . . . Minister Egfridi regis . . . depositis armis . . . tantum mansit humilis, fratrumque simillimus aliorum, ut ventilare cum eis et triturare, oves vitulasque mulgere, in pistrino, in horto, in cunctis monasterii operibus jocundus et obediens gauderet exercerі. . . . Nequi vellet limpidissimam vultus ejus lucem nubilo sibi suæ inquietudinis abscondere. . . . Vel aratri gressum stiva regendo, vel ferrum malleo domando, vel ventilabrum manu concutiendo." — *Vitæ Abbatum*, c. 7.

which he left only five days before his death, being then hopelessly ill, to prepare himself, in a more solitary place for the last struggle. When he felt his end approaching, he had still strength enough left to go down to the garden, and seating himself there, called to him all his brethren, who wept the anticipated loss of such a father. Then, with the tenderness which was natural to him, he gave to each of them a last kiss.[97] The following night he died, aged thirty-six, while the monks were singing matins. Such happy deaths, which are common in the history of the time, seem to have been at once the privilege and the seal of all those generous vocations which filled the numerous monasteries of converted England.

Death of Easterwine. 7th March, 686.

When Benedict returned from his last expedition to Rome, he found his benefactor and protector, King Egfrid, and his nephew and coadjutor, Easterwine, both dead, along with a great number of his monks, carried off by one of the epidemics then so frequent. The only survivors at Yarrow were the abbot, and one little scholar whom we shall find again further on, and whose fame was destined to eclipse that of all the Saxon saints and kings, who are scarcely known to posterity except by his pen.[98] Benedict did not lose courage, but promptly collected new subjects under his sway, recommencing and pursuing, with his habitual energy, the decoration of his two Churches of St. Peter and St. Paul.[99] The monks had already chosen as successor to Easterwine a deacon named Sigfried, a learned and virtuous man, but affected by pulmonary disease, and the first of the English, I

[97] "Sub divo residens, accitis ad se fratribus cunctis, more naturæ misericordis osculum pacis eis flentibus et de abscessu tanti patris et pastoris mœrentibus dedit."

[98] This pupil is generally thought to be no other than the Venerable Bede, who relates the touching incident in the following words: "Omnes qui legere, vel prædicare, vel antiphonas ac responsaria dicere possunt ablati sunt, excepto ipso abbate et uno puerulo, qui ab ipso nutritus ac eruditus, nunc usque in eo monasterio presbyterii gradum tenens, jure actus ejus laudabiles cunctis scire volentibus et scripto commandat et fatis." — *Append.*, p. 421. He describes further on how the abbot and his pupil celebrated, alone and in great sadness, the whole psalms of the monastic service, *non parvo cum labore*, until new monks arrived.

[99] A fine engraving by Hollar, republished in Mr. Jamieson's *Monastic Legends*, represents him standing, dressed in pontifical robes; in the background are the two beautiful monasteries of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the Tyne flowing between them — an arrangement not geographically exact, but which answers to the intention of reproducing on the Northumbrian coast the Basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul on the two opposite banks of the Tiber at Rome.

think, in whom history indicates a malady so general and so fatal to their race.[100]

His last illness and exhortations.

Benedict's own turn was, however, soon to come. God preserved his life to purify him, and put his patience to a long and cruel trial, before calling him to his eternal recompense. After having devoted the first thirteen years of his abbatiate to the laborious and wandering life that was so dear to him, and to those distant expeditions that produced so many fruits for his order and his country, he was stricken by a cruel disease, which lasted for three years, and paralyzed all his members one after the other. Though kept to his bed by this infirmity, and unable to follow his brethren to the choir, he notwithstanding continued to celebrate each service, both day and night, with certain of the monks, mingling his feeble voice with theirs. At night his sleepless hours were consoled by the reading of the Gospels, which was kept up without interruption by a succession of priests. Often, too, he collected the monks and novices round his couch, addressing to them urgent and solemn counsels, and among other things begging them to preserve the great library which he had brought from Rome, and not to allow it to be spoiled or dispersed; but above all to keep faithfully the rules which, after a careful study of the seventeen principal monasteries which he had visited during his numerous journeys beyond seas, he had given to them.[101] He also dwelt much upon the injunction he had already often repeated, that they should pay no regard to high birth in their choice of an abbot, but look simply to his life and doctrine. He prayed them to elect to this office the most worthy among themselves, in conformity to the rules of St. Benedict and the charter he had obtained for them. "If

[100] "Nocivo et irremediabili pulmonum vitio laborantem." — *Vitæ Abbat.*, c. 8.

[101] "Evangelium tota nocte pro doloris levamine, quod et aliis noctibus fieri consueverat. . . . Ex decem quippe et septem monasteriis quæ inter longos meæ crebræ peregrinationis discursus optima comperi, hæc universa didici, et vobis salubriter observanda contradidi." — Bede, *Vitæ Abbat.*, c. 8. Lingard (i. 208) believes from this passage that the rule of St. Benedict was only partially followed at Wearmouth; but it evidently refers only to those special regulations and laws which have been always made use of in all abbeys or congregations of abbeys, to develop and complete the fundamental rule. That this rule was known and followed in the Northumbrian monasteries, is plain from the exhortation of Benedict Biscop to his monks regarding their choice of a successor, in which he enjoins them to proceed "juxta quod regula magni quondam abbatis Benedicti, juxta quod privilegii nostri continent decreta." — Cf. Mabillon, *Præfatio in Sæculum Benedictinum*, n. 88, 89.

I had to choose between two evils, I should prefer," he said to them, "to see the spot on which I have established our dear monastery fall back into eternal solitude, rather than to be succeeded here by my own brother, who, we all know, is not in the good way.[102] Thus Benedict shows himself to have been moved by a presentiment of one of the most cruel dangers and fatal weaknesses with which the future of the monastic order could be threatened.

Death of Benedict Biscop. 12th Jan., 690.

The strength of the holy abbot, and, at the same time, that of his poor coadjutor, was by this time so exhausted by their respective diseases, that they both perceived they were about to die, and desired to see each other for the last time before departing from this world. In order that the wish of these two tender friends should be accomplished, it was necessary to bring the dying coadjutor to the bed of the abbot. His head was placed on the same pillow; but they were both so feeble that they could not even embrace each other, and the help of brotherly hands was necessary to aid them.[103] All the monks assembled in chapter round this bed of suffering and love; and the two aged saints, having pointed out among them a successor approved by all, breathed together, with a short interval between, their last breath. Thus died, at the age of sixty-two, St. Benedict of England, a worthy rival of the great patriarch of the monks of the West, whose robe and name he bore, being, like him, a victor over sin and master of all virtue.[104]

The government of the two monasteries, Wearmouth and Yarrow, goes to Ceolfrid,

The monk proposed by the two dying saints to the choice of their brethren, to replace them as abbot of the two monasteries, was the same Ceolfrid who had accompanied Benedict to Rome and to Canterbury, and who was already Abbot of Yarrow. Like all the chiefs of the great Northumbrian com-

[102] "Vere dico vobis quod . . . tolerabilius mihi multo est totum hunc locum in quo monasterium feci . . . in solitudinem sempiternam redigi quam ut frater meus carnalis . . . in eo regendo pro me abbatis nomine succedat."

[103] "Egfridus in feretro deportaretur ad cubiculum ubi Benedictus et ipse suo jacebat in grabato . . . caput utriusque in eodem cervicali locaretur . . . vel tantum habuere virium, ut propius posita ora ad osculandum se alterutrum conjungere possent, sed et hoc fraterno compleverunt officio." — *Vitæ Abbat.*, c. 10.

[104] "Vitiorum victor Benedictus et virtutum patrator egregius victus infirmitate carnis ad extrema pervenit. . . . Anima illa sancta longis flagellorum felicium excocta atque examinata flammis luteam carnis fornacem deserit." *Ibid.*, c. 11. He died January 12, 690, at the age of sixty-two.

munities, with the exception of Cuthbert, he proceeded from the highest rank of Anglo-Saxon nobility. His father bore the dignity of *ealdorman*, the highest rank after the blood-royal, and was famed for his magnificence. On one occasion, when he expected a visit from the king, the news of the sudden incursion of some enemy obliged the prince to depart before beginning the magnificently prepared repast, upon which the earl assembled all the poor of the quarter, put them in the place of the king and his attendants, and, when they were all seated, served the men with his own hands, while his countess performed the same office for the women.

A disciple of Wilfrid.

Ceolfrid, who became a monk at eighteen, had been trained at Ripon, in the school of Wilfrid, who ordained him priest after ten years of study.[105] After this, in order to understand better the traditions and obligations of his profession, he visited the monastic metropolis of Canterbury, and on his way back spent some time with an old abbot named Botulph, whose virtues and knowledge were much renowned.[106] Botulph, too, was of a noble family of East Anglia;[107] his parents were among the oldest Christians of England, and had sent him while quite young across the sea into a monastery in Gaul, to learn, says his biographer, the glories of the faith, and to train himself to apostolical life. When he returned some years after, furnished with recommendations from two young East Anglian princesses whom he had met in his Gaulish monastery, he gained the heart of the kings of his tribe. These princes offered him lands which were already under cultivation, and were even allotted, according to feudal law,

And of Botulph, the founder of Icanhoe.

[105] The elder brother of Ceolfrid had been Abbot of Gilling, the monastery founded by Queen Eanfleda to expiate her husband's crime in murdering the holy King Oswin; afterwards preferring contemplation to an active life, he exiled himself to Ireland, and there spent the rest of his life in the study of Holy Scripture. He died, together with several other English nobles, of the plague. This is a fresh example of the frequent relations of the Anglo-Saxons with monastic Ireland. Ceolfrid commenced his career at Gilling, from whence he was summoned to Ripon with the whole community, by Wilfrid.

[106] "Ut videret instituta Botulfi abbatis quem . . . fama circumquaque vulgaverat." — *Histor. Abbatum* in *Append.* Bedæ. p. 417.

[107] *Ad Anglos Orientales*, says the Life of Ceolfrid just cited; and this designation does not contradict that of *Angli Australes*, used by the contemporary author of the Life of St. Botulph, published by Mabillon (*Act. SS. O. S. B.*, sæc. iii. pars i. p. 3). The Angles of Mercia and East Anglia were in fact southerners in the eyes of the Angles of Northumbria. Besides, two of the kings named in the biography as sovereigns of Botulph's country, Adelher and Adelwold, figure among the East Anglian kings. — *See* Lappenberg, Genealogical Table E at the end of his first volume.

to other proprietors; but Botulph refused to have any one impoverished for his advantage, and preferred an uncultivated estate, situated on a little river not far from the Northern Sea,[108] where he founded the great Monastery of Icanhoe, which has since grown into a town, and has borrowed its modern name, Boston, from that of its founder (*Botulph's town*).[109] Botulph's chief aim was to build and regulate his monastery on the model of the communities where he had lived, or which he had visited on the Continent — that is to say, in strict conformity with the rule of St. Benedict. He lived there for more than half a century, surrounded by the veneration and love of his countrymen, and working steadily to secure the complete observance of Benedictine laws in his community — a procedure which in the district where he had established himself did not fail to appear a grave innovation. The care which his biographer, a contemporary of his own, takes to set forth this distinctive feature, which ran through his whole life, makes it apparent that he had to contend with the resistance of his monks, and that he only succeeded by sometimes sacrificing his natural humility and his popularity to the austere duties of his abbatial charge. He repeated daily to his disciples the laws and lessons which he had brought from beyond sea; and even on his death-bed, during the attacks of sickness which consumed his old age, he never ceased to recall the recollections of his monastic journeys, and to boast the gentleness and beauty of the true rule.[110] About 654.

Imbued with the teaching of this great doctor of monastic life, Ceolfrid returned to Ripon, to redouble his zeal and fervor in the practice of his profession. When he became

[108] "Ut ubi plenius addiscerent et Sanctæ Fidei gloriam, et sanctæ conversationis in apostolicis institutionibus disciplinam. . . . Petit simpliciter, non ut aliquem regia violentia de hereditario jure caussa sui depellat, sed potius ut de incultis terris . . . sibi tantum concedat." — *Vita S. Botulfi*, c. 2 and 5.

[109] Situated on the Witham, in Lincolnshire: the English town of Boston gave its name to the celebrated capital of Massachusetts, the fame and influence of which, in North America, have been always so considerable.

[110] "Imperitis vitæ regularis attulit normam, et in monasticis observationibus magnus legislator antea incognitam docuit viam. . . . Ad instar monasteriorum ubi conversatus fuerat in partibus Galliæ cæptum opus perfecit. . . . Quod transmarinis partibus didicerat de monachorum districtiori vita et regulari consuetudine, memoriter repetendo quotidianis inculcationibus subditos consuescit. . . . Appropinquante vitæ termino de observandis regulis monasteriorum quæ peregrinus petierat, loqui et sæpius repetere dulce ac delectabiliter ducebat." — *Vita S. Botulfi*, c. 4, 7, 9, 10.

master of the novices at Ripon, the son of the caldorman distinguished himself by his energy in all those manual labors, which must have been so repugnant to the pride and habits of the Anglo-Saxon nobles. Without giving up his priestly functions he took charge of the bake-house, and was daily to be found at the furnace occupied in cleaning or heating it, and in baking bread for the use of the house.[111] His fame reached the ears of Benedict Biscop, who, as soon as he began his enterprise, asked him from Wilfrid. His request was granted; and this is the sole evidence which exists in history of any link whatever between the celebrated Bishop of York and the great monasteries founded by the friend of his youth. After his transfer to Wearmouth, Ceolfrid was soon made the deputy, as prior, of Abbot Benedict, during his journeys. But he found among the new monks certain sons of nobles like himself, who refused to be controlled by the severe discipline which he enforced upon them both by precept and example, and who pursued him with their murmurs and calumnies.[112] The effect of this upon him was such that, taking advantage of the absence of Benedict, he gave up his charge and returned to Ripon, to resume his former life there. Benedict hastened after him, and brought him back by dint of entreaties. After this he never relaxed his hold upon Ceolfrid, taking him with him in all his journeys up to the day when, as has been seen, he confided the government of the new Monastery of Yarrow to him whom he wished to make his inseparable companion and fellow-laborer.[113]

Ceolfrid took with him twenty-two monks from Wearmouth, to fill up the new foundation; but among these there were several who could not yet sing or even read aloud the service in the choir according to the requirements of the monastic ritual. Ceolfrid had to complete their musical and liturgical education, at the same time as he began that of the new-comers who soon thronged to Yarrow. By dint of entering himself into all the studies and exercises of his community, even in their minutest details, until the Benedictine observances took permanent root among them, he succeeded

[111] "Pistorii officium tenens, inter cribrandum clibanumque accendendum mundandumque, et panes in eo coquendos, presbyteratus ceremonias sedulus discere simul et exercere non omisit." — *Append.*, p. 417.

[112] "Invidias quorundam nobilium, qui regularem ejus disciplinam ferre nequibant, insecutionesque patiebatur acerrimas." — *Append.*, p. 418.

[113] "Ipse illi comes individuus, cooperator et doctor regularis et monasticæ institutionis aderat." — *Vitæ*, c. 16.

in his task. And he had to wield the trowel as well as the crosier, in order to direct and complete in less than two years the construction of the new abbey church, in which King Egfrid himself fixed the situation of the great altar.[114]

Ceolfrid, when placed by the death of his friend at the head of the two Monasteries of Wearmouth and Yarrow, which then formed one community of six hundred monks,[115] displayed for twenty seven years an unwearying activity and superior intelligence, as well as all the virtues of ascetic life. He was in every respect a worthy successor of Benedict: he took pains to enrich the two libraries, which were so great an object of care to his predecessor; and on occasion made use of his books for other purposes than the instruction of his monks. It is true that he had to deal with a learned king, trained at Iona, the enemy of Wilfrid and his Roman predilections, but as much a lover of books as any saint or monk, either Irish like Columba, or Anglo-Saxon like Biscop. The latter had brought from Rome a curious system of cosmography, which King Aldfrid burned to possess, and which he obtained from the Abbot Ceolfrid in exchange for land supporting eight families. The abbot afterwards found means of exchanging this estate, with the addition of a sum of money, for another estate twice or three times as large, situated opposite the Monastery of Yarrow, to which belonged the precious book which was the occasion of a traffic so lucrative.[116] It must not be supposed from this that the great abbot was interested or mercenary; he had, on the contrary, retained in the cloister the generous habits of his noble race; and Bede expressly tells that he never received a present or donation from neighboring lords without giving them, as soon as possible, an equivalent.[117]

The exchange of a book for an estate.

[114] "Sed juvet amor religionis et studiosi rectoris exemplum atque instantia sollers, qui donec illum observantiæ regularis radicem fieret, horis omnibus canonicis cum fratribus ecclesiam frequentare, refici et quiescere solebat." — *Append.*, p. 420.

[115] "Utrique monasterio, vel sicut rectius dicere possumus, in duobus locis posito uni monasterio. . . . Relictis in suis monasteriis fratribus numero ferme sexcentis." — *Vitæ Abbatum*, c. 12, 13.

[116] "Bibliothecam utriusque monasterii . . . non minori germinavit industria. . . . Dato Cosmographorum codice mirandi operis . . . terram octo familiarum . . . ab Alfrido regi in Scripturis doctissimo . . . comparavit, quem comparandi ordinem ipse dum adhuc viveret, Benedictus . . . taxaverat, sed prius quam complere potuisset, obiit. . . . Verum pro hac terra postmodum, Osredo regnante, addito pretio digno, terram xx. familiarum . . . accepit." — *Vita*, c. 12.

[117] "A viris principalibus quibus cunctis erat honorabilis . . . hanc habens

Let us add, while speaking of books, that he had two complete copies made of the Bible, according to the version of St. Jerome, which he had brought from Rome, and placed them in his two churches, that they might be read and consulted by all who wished to do so[118] — a new refutation, among so many others, of the stupid calumny which represents the Church as having in former times interdicted to her children the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures.

Ceolfrid's anxiety for the intellectual and material interests of his community did nowise diminish his zeal for the regular discipline and spiritual independence of his brethren. He took pains to have the charter of immunity obtained from Agathon renewed by the Pope St. Sergius, and confirmed in full synod by King Aldfrid. He devoted a considerable portion of each day, and his unwearying attention, to the prayers and sacred song of the choir; neither age nor sickness, nor even travel, seemed to him sufficient reasons for dispensing with this. Severe as it was his duty to be against the least irregularity, he lavished on the weak encouragements and consolations, and was hard only to himself, his living and clothing being of a temperance which seemed at that time surprising in the chief of so powerful an institution.[119]

700.

When he had passed his seventieth year, he no longer found himself strong enough to give to his monks an example of life conformed to the rule; and he was anxious, besides, to return before he died to Rome, where he had in his youth accompanied his friend and master, there to prepare himself for death in silence. In vain the monks, when informed of his design, threw themselves on their knees to keep him back. Nothing could change his purpose. As soon as he had formed his resolution he put it in practice, fearing that if it were known he might be disturbed from without by entreaties, or even

712-716.

He desires to die at Rome.

semper consuetudinem, ut si quis ei aliquid muneris offerret, hoc illi vel statim vel post intervallum competens, non minore gratia rependeret." — C. 13. It is evident that they were already, even in the most fervent and exemplary communities, far from a state of primitive poverty.

[118] "Todiem per duo sua monasteria posuit in ecclesiis, ut *cunctis*, qui aliquod capitulum de utrolibet Testamento legere voluissent, in promptu esset invenire quod cuperent." — *Vita Ceolfridi*, in *Append.* Bedæ, *Op. Min.*, a. 325.

[119] "Acutus ingenio, actis impiger . . . per incomparabilem orandi psallendique sollertiam, qua ipse quotidianus exerceri non desiit . . . post insolitam rectoribus et escæ potusque parcitatem."

by the presents[120] of the friends he had among the nobility of the neighborhood, and indeed of all Northumbria. Three days after having declared his decision to the afflicted community, he said mass in the morning very early, gave the communion to all present, and, standing on the steps of the altar with the censer in his hand, blessed all his children. They began to sing litanies, which were interrupted by tears and sobs; Ceolfrid then led them to an oratory, which he had dedicated to the martyr St. Lawrence, near the dormitory, and there addressed to them, as Benedict had done on his deathbed, a last exhortation. Its special subject was charity and mutual brotherly correction; and he entreated all those who might have found him too hard to pardon him and pray for him. From thence he descended to the bank of the river which bathes the walls of the monastery, followed by the six hundred monks of the two communities; after having received from their father a last kiss moistened with tears, they all knelt down. The old abbot then entered the ship that was to carry him away; and from the deck, on which the cross had been reared between two torches, he gave them his last benediction and disappeared from their sight. 4th June, 716.

Ceolfrid himself could not contain his grief at this parting; at the distant sound of the chants of his monks, broken by their sobs, his tears flowed. Again and again he was heard to say, "Christ, my Lord and my God, have pity on this worthy and numerous company. Protect these dear children. I am sure that better or more obedient are nowhere to be found."[121]

When they re-entered the monastery, the monks proceeded on the spot to the election of the new abbot. At the end of three days the universal suffrage of the two communities fixed upon a young man, trained at Wearmouth from his in-

[120] "Ne pecunia daretur ei a quibusdam, quibus retribuere pro tempore nequiret."

[121] "Omnibus in lacrymas singultusque genua cum obsecratione crebra flectentibus. . . . Cantata ergo primo mane missa . . . conveniunt omnes . . . pacem dat omnibus, thuribulum habens in manu: tunc fletibus universorum inter Letanias resonantibus, exeunt . . . veniunt ad littus, rursum osculo pacis inter lacrymas omnibus dato, genua flectunt . . . ascendit navem . . . transit flumen, adorat crucem, ascendit equum et abiit." — C. 13. "Audiensque sonum mixti cum luctu carminis, nullatenus valuit ipse a singultu et lacrymis temperare. Hoc autem solum crebra voce repetiit: Christe Deus, miserere illi cœtui . . . protege illam cohortem . . . scio certissime quia nullos unquam meliores illis et promptiores ad obedientiam novi." — *Append.*, p. 425.

fancy, and worthy of his illustrious predecessors, in his zeal for study, song, and teaching, as their united chief. As soon as he was elected, the new abbot rushed after Ceolfrid, and found him in the port waiting a favorable wind for crossing to the Continent. He gave him a letter to the Pope, from which we quote the following passages: —

"To the blessed Pope Gregory II., our dear lord in the Lord of lords, Huetberct, your humble servant, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Peter, prince of the apostles, among the Saxons, everlasting greeting. — In the name of all my brethren, united in this place with me to find rest for their souls and to bear the sweet yoke of Christ, we recommend to your dear and holy kindness the hoary hairs of our venerable and beloved father, the Abbot Ceolfrid, who has ruled, trained, fed, and defended us in monastic peace and freedom. He has torn himself from us in the midst of our lamentations, tears, and sorrow; but we thank the holy and invisible Trinity that it has been given him to attain to the blessed joy of rest which he has so long desired. He returns in his extreme old age to the tombs of the apostles, his visits to which in youth he has always remembered with enthusiasm. After forty years of work and care in his monastic government, he shows himself as much inspired by the love of virtue as though he were still in the first freshness of his conversion; and on the threshold of death, bent under the weight of age, he again becomes a pilgrim for Christ. We conjure your Paternity, render to this beloved father those last duties of filial piety which it will not be permitted to us to accomplish. Afterwards you will keep his body; but his soul will remain with us both — with us and with you; and after his death, as during his life, we shall find in him a friend, a protector, and intercessor with God." [122]

The wishes of the double community of Wearmouth and Yarrow, thus expressed with so much filial affection, were not fulfilled. Ceolfrid never reached Rome; the fatigues of

[122] "Eligitur Huætberctus . . . scribendi, cantandi, legendi ac docendi non parva exercitatus industria . . . electus abbas ab omnibus utriusque monasterii fratribus. . . . Una cum sanctis fratribus qui mecum in his locis ad inveniendam requiem animabus suis suavissimum Christi jugum portare desiderant. . . . Commendamus . . . venerabiles patris nostri dilectissimi canos . . . nutritoris tutorisque nostræ spiritualis in monastica quiete libertatis et pacis. . . . Ad suæ tamen diu desideratæ quietis gaudia sancta pervenit . . . dum ea quæ juvenem se adiisse atque adorasse semper recordans exultabat . . . repetiit . . . prope jam moriturus, rursus incipit peregrinari pro Christo. . . . Supplicamus ut quod nos facere non meruimus, vos erga illum ultimæ pietatis munus seduli expleatis." — *Vita Abbatum*, c. 14.

the journey aggravated the weakness of his old age. He took three months to travel from Northumbria to the frontiers of Burgundy. During these three months he did not cease for a single day to celebrate mass and sing the entire monastic service, even when his weakness prevented him from moving except in a litter.[123] He was able to travel only as far as Langres, where he died at the age of seventy-four — forty-three years of his age having been consecrated to the work of training or governing souls in the cloister. He was buried in a monastery, afterwards known by the name of St. Geosmes, and which took that name from the twins, who, along with their grandmother, St. Leonilla, were martyred there under the Cæsars.[124] His austere life did not prevent him from travelling with all the retinue of a great personage, as indeed the abbot of the greatest community of the Anglo-Saxons of the North already was. Of the eighty English who composed his suit some continued their pilgrimage to Rome, others returned to England, and some preferred to pass the rest of their lives in the midst of a people whose language they did not understand, rather than separate themselves from the tomb of a father to whom they clung with an unchangeable love.[125]

25th Sept., 711.

I beg my readers to make an effort to represent to themselves who these eighty companions of old Ceolfrid were, and who also were, and from whence came, the six hundred Anglo-Saxons whom we have just seen kneeling on the sandy beach, on the shore of the Northern Sea, to receive the blessing of our aged abbot, going forth to brave the danger and fatigues of a laborious journey, with the hope of dying near the tomb of St. Peter and St. Paul. I would fain see the coldest and most bitter of sceptics transported for an instant in thought to that far distant shore. I should accompany

[123] "Per dies cxiv., exceptis canonicis horis quotidie bis psalterium ex ordine decantare curavit, etiam cum ad hoc per infirmitatem deveniret, ut equitare non valens feretro caballario veheretur, quotidie missa cantata salutaris hostiæ Deo munus offerret, excepto uno, quo oceanum navigabat, et tribus ante exitum diebus."

[124] Their names were Speusippus, Eleusippus, and Meleusippus. The mention of these martyrs leads me to point out in passing the singularly instructive and conclusive examination given to this history by M. l'Abbé Bougaud in his learned *Etude sur la Mission, les Actes, et le Culte de Saint Bénigne, Apôtre de la Bourgogne.* Dijon, 1859, pp. 171, 172.

[125] "Partim ad tumbam defuncti inter eos quorum nec linguam noverant, pro inextinguibili patris affectus redere." — *Vitæ Abbatum*, c. 15.

him willingly, with no intermediary between him and me except simple good faith.

We should then find ourselves in the eighth century, in all its darkness, in all its barbarism, in an island destined to become again and again the prey of bloody and atrocious invasions. These are the sons of pirates, of incendiaries, of ravagers and murderers, who surround us. Yet see what they have become! Not all, certainly, but the first and most powerful, those in whom the abuse of strength, victory, and wealth would have produced most scandal and excess. See what the Christian religion has made of those wild hearts; look at the flowers which have blossomed by its means in that soil watered with blood and horror. Behold its fruits, its victories, its conquests, its chief spoil. Religion has established herself on that desolated land, amid these pitiless conquerors. She has shown them peace, gentleness, labor, virtue, truth, light, heaven; and after having thus lavished upon them a treasury of new thoughts, beliefs, and strength, new food for their intelligence, and unknown resources for their social order, she has taught them to love, to love one another, to love souls — and to imprint the recollection of that love upon scenes and words which cannot deceive and will not be forgotten.

CHAPTER III.

END OF THE CELTIC HERESY. — ADAMNAN, EGBERT, ST. ALDHELM.

The King of the Picts requests Ceolfrid to send him architects, and arguments in favor of Roman unity. — Answer of Ceolfrid, in which he quotes from Plato. — The Picts abandon the Celtic peculiarities. — The monks of Iona leave their monasteries rather than adopt the Roman ritual. — Their abbot, Adamnan, biographer of Columba, and the last great personage of the Celtic Church. — His relations with King Aldfrid and the Abbot Ceolfrid. — He attempts in vain to lead the monks of Iona back to Roman rule, but has more success in Ireland, where he dies. — Iona is brought back to Catholic unity by the Anglo-Saxon Egbert, the head of a colony of Saxon monks in Ireland. — His austere and holy life. — He loses his most intimate friend, who reproaches him for desiring to survive him. — He uses his influence with the Anglo-Saxons to send them as missionaries to Ger-

many. — After thirteen years' struggle, he overcomes the resistance of Iona, and dies on the very day when the feast of Easter is celebrated by both parties together. — Ireland and Caledonia having been thus brought back to Catholic unity, only the Britons of Cambria and Cornwall remain outside its pale, by reason of their national antipathy for the Saxon conquerors. — Note upon Bede's injustice to them. — Attempt of St. Aldhelm to bring them in. — His royal birth, and education — half Celtic, half Roman — at Malmesbury and Canterbury. — He becomes Abbot of Malmesbury. — His literary fame greater than his merit; his vernacular songs; intellectual development of Anglo-Saxon cloisters. — Extent and variety of his studies. — His continual solicitude for souls. — His great monastic character. — His zeal for preaching. — He interferes in favor of Wilfrid. — He goes to Rome to obtain the privilege of exemption for Malmesbury, the monks of which persist in retaining him as abbot, even after his promotion to the episcopate. — Anecdote about the importation of Bibles. — Death of Aldhelm. — His exertions for bringing back Celtic dissenters. — His letter to the King of Cornwall. — The Britons of Cambria, who had resisted all the efforts of Roman and Saxon missionaries, adopt the Roman ritual by the influence of one of their own bishops. — Their pilgrimages to Rome. — End of the struggle. — Opinion of Mabillon. — Resistance proportioned to the dangers which beset the special nationality. — Union the work of Benedictines. — In the Britannic Isles, as among the Gauls, Celtic monasticism conquered and eclipsed by the Benedictine order.

The memory of Ceolfrid, along with that of his faithful English, has faded out of the country in which he died. But he belongs nevertheless to the general history of the Church by the direct influence which he exercised upon the conclusion of that great struggle between Celtic Christianity and Roman unity which had agitated the British Isles for more than a century, and which had caused so many holy monks, from Augustin to Wilfrid, so much anxious thought and effort. Ceolfrid, trained in the school of Wilfrid, had the glory of giving the last blow to that species of schism which Wilfrid to his cost had conquered; and this supreme victory was won at the very time when Wilfrid concluded in obscurity his long and laborious career.

A year after the death of Wilfrid, Nechtan, the king of those Picts who occupied the north of Caledonia, the successor of that Bruidh who received the great Celtic apostle Columba, wrote to Abbot Ceolfrid a memorable letter. This tributary king was not only a Christian, but greatly occupied by religious questions. He meditated much on the Holy Scriptures, and was thus led to understand, and to regret, the advantages of Catholic unity, from which his nation

was to a certain extent separate by the paschal question. He resolved to lead back his people to the Roman rule, notwithstanding the obstinate resistance of the monks of Iona, the sons of St. Columba, who continued the apostolical work of their patriarch. To overcome their opposition, he determined, in one of the singular revolutions of mortal affairs, to address himself to that Northumbria which had been evangelized by Celtic missionaries from Iona, imbued with the traditional error of their race, but which he knew to have already conformed to the rules of the Roman Church. At the same time, in seeking the aid of the Anglo-Saxon Church, he did not apply either to the bishops who had divided among themselves Wilfrid's spoil, nor even to the great Monastery of Lindisfarne, which had been so long the point of junction between the two races. Instead, he knocked at the door of the new sanctuaries on the banks of the Wear and Tyne, to which Benedict Biscop had given the highest place in public veneration; he asked the aid of Abbot Ceolfrid, who for twenty years had worthily occupied the place of the holy traveller. He sent to him a special embassy to ask of him good arguments, set forth in writing, with which to refute the partisans of Celtic ritualism in respect to Easter and the tonsure;[125] and at the same time prayed the abbot to send him architects to build him a church of stone, like the Romans, promising to dedicate the church, when built, to the honor of St. Peter, and to follow with all his people the observances of the Roman Church as much as the distance and difference of language permitted them to do.[127]

The King of the Picts requests Ceolfrid to send him architects, and arguments in favor of Roman unity. 710.

Ceolfrid sent him architects, who were, without doubt, monks of his community, and whose mission thus gives us the exact date of the introduction of Christian architecture into Scotland, where up to that moment the churches were made of wood, or osiers, in the Irish fashion. He wrote at the same time to the Pictish king a

Answer of Ceolfrid, in

[126] "Naiton . . . admonitus ecclesiasticarum frequenti meditatione scripturarum. . . . Quæsivit auxilium de gente Anglorum quos jamdudum ad exemplum S. Romanæ et Apostolicæ Ecclesiæ suam religionem instituisse cognovit. . . . Postulans ut exhortatorias sibi litteras mitteret, quibus potentius confortare posset eos qui Pascha non suo tempore observare præsumerent. . . . Sed et architectos . . . qui juxta morem Romanorum ecclesiam de lapide in gente ipsius facerent." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 21.

[127] "In quantum dumtaxat tam longe a Romanorum loquela et natione segregati nunc ediscere potuissent."

long letter which Bede has preserved to us, and in which he begins by quoting, not the Scriptures or the Fathers, but Plato, in that well-known passage in the *Republic* where it is said that, for the happiness of the world, it is necessary that kings should be philosophers, or philosophers kings. In the legitimate glory of the greatest thinker of antiquity there is, perhaps, no ray purer or more precious than that invocation of his name and authority, more than a thousand years after his death, by a Saxon prelate to a Celtic king, both sprung from races totally unknown to Greece and her great men. "But," adds Ceolfrid, "if a man of the world was right in thinking and speaking thus, in what concerns the philosophy of this world, how much more ought the citizens of the celestial country, exiled here below, to desire that the great ones of this earth should apply themselves to know the laws of the Supreme Judge, and, by their example and authority, to make these laws observed. Thus we take it as a mark of heavenly favor bestowed on the Church each time that the masters of the world apply themselves to know, to teach, or to keep the truth."[128] Thereupon he enters into a theological and astronomical discussion, in which, passing in review the text of the Pentateuch, and the various cycles used from the time of Eusebius to that of Denis the Little, he proves that Easter ought to be celebrated, according to the usage of the Catholic Church, in the third week of the first lunar month, and always on Sunday. As for the tonsure, he admits that it is, in itself, an indifferent matter; but he insists upon the fabulous tradition, which all the orthodox then held as an article of faith, by which the Roman tonsure, in the form of a crown, was attributed to St. Peter, and the Irish tonsure, in which the front of the head was shaven, to Simon the Magician.

which he quotes Plato.

The letter of the Northumbrian abbot, which appears to modern readers long and wearisome, was completely successful. It was read publicly to the Pictish king, in presence of all the wise men of the country, translated verbally into their language. As soon as he had heard it, he rose, and, in the midst of the nobles by whom he was surrounded, knelt down and thanked God to have been so fortunate as to have received such a present

The Picts and their king abandon the Celtic ritual.

[128] "Vere omnino dixit quidam secularium scriptorum. . . . Quod si de philosophia hujus mundi vere intelligere et de statu hujus mundi merito dicere potuit homo hujus mundi, quanto magis cœlestis patriæ civibus." — BEDE, *ibid.*

from England. "I knew well," he said, "that this was the true way of celebrating Easter. But now I see the reason so clearly that I seem to have understood nothing about it before. For this cause, I take you all to witness, all you who sit with me here, that I will henceforward keep Easter thus, with all my people, and I ordain that all the clerks in my kingdom assume this tonsure.[129] The ordinance was immediately put in operation, and the messengers of the king carried into all the provinces copies of the paschal calculation, with orders to efface the ancient tables. The monks and other ecclesiastics had also to receive the tonsure according to the Roman custom. Bede affirms that the change was received with universal joy in the Pictish nation. Nevertheless, the monks who had come from Iona — those of the *family of Columb-kill*, the *Columbites*, as Ceolfrid calls them — acted as their brethren at Ripon and Lindisfarne had acted fifty years before. They preferred to leave their establishments, colonies founded more than a century before by their patriarch and his disciples, rather than to give up their insular tradition. A single line, short but expressive, in the annals of Ireland, bears witness to their fate. It is thus summed up — "King Nechtan expels the family of Iona from the country beyond the *dorsum Britanniæ*."[130]

The monks of Iona leave their monasteries rather than adopt the Roman ritual.

The country now called Scotland was then divided, as has been seen, between the Picts in the north and east, the Scots in the west, the Britons in Strathclyde, and the Northumbrians in the south. The supremacy of the Northumbrian kings, up to the downfall of Egfrid, over all the districts south of the Clyde and Forth, had been sufficient to secure in that part of the country, the observance of the Roman ritual, represented by such men as Wilfrid and Cuthbert. The conversion of the Picts, under King Nechtan, to the Roman rule, in respect to Easter, established liturgical and theological unity throughout the northern part of Great Britain, with the exception of the isle of Iona and the

[129] "Epistola, præsente rege Naitono, multisque viris doctioribus lecta ac diligenter ab his qui intelligere potuerant in linguam ejus propriam interpretata . . . exsurgens de medio optimatum sacro in consessu. . . . In tantum modo rationem hujus temporis observandi cognosco, ut parum mihi omnino videar de his antea intellexisse." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 21.

[130] "Expulsio familiæ Ie trans dorsum Britanniæ a Nectano rege." — *Annales Tigernachii*, ad ann. 717. See above, p. 50, for the description of the mountain-range called *dorsum Britanniæ*.

little kingdom of the Dalriadian Scots, which probably to the last extremity remained faithful to the ritual and traditions of their national sanctuary.

Adamnan, Abbot of Iona, and biographer of St. Columba. 624-703.

Yet, notwithstanding, a very eminent Irish monk — Adamnan, himself Abbot of Iona, and the most illustrious of Columba's successors — had long attempted to lead back the mother community, mistress of all the Caledonian Church, and always influential in the Church of Ireland, to the unity of Rome. If our readers have retained in their recollection our narrative of St. Columba, they will pardon us for dwelling a little upon his biographer, of all the Irish monks the one to whom posterity is most indebted, for his revelation to us, not only of that great man, the immortal honor of the Celtic Church — but also of the spirit, general and individual, and the private and local life of that whole Church. He was the countryman and near relative of his holy predecessor, sprung, like him, from the sovereign race of the Nialls. When he was but a scholar, having been dedicated from his childhood to monastic life, he had, according to the legend, gained the favor of a powerful chief — Finnachta the Feaster or Banqueter. While begging, according to the usage of the time, for himself and his five companions, each of whom took it in turn to seek the daily nourishment, he met the cavalcade of the chief, and in running out of the way struck against a stone, fell, and broke the milk-jar which he carried on his back, and which contained all he had collected.[131] "Be not sad," said the chief, "I will protect thee." When Finnachta became monarch of all Ireland, Adamnan was his *Anmachara* or spiritual counsellor; and this fact explains the important part he played in Ireland during his whole life. After having been a monk at Iona under three abbots, he was himself elected abbot in 679. Aldfrid, the Northumbrian prince, brother and successor of Egfrid, then an exile in Ireland, had taken refuge in Iona, and had become the friend and the disciple of Adamnan: and when, after Egfrid's downfall, the exile became King of Northumberland, the abbot went to his former guest to reclaim the captives, men and women, whom the soldiers of Egfrid had carried away in the previous year, after their cruel and bloody invasion of Ireland.[132] His mission was not entirely

His relations with King Aldfrid. 685.

[131] REEVES, *Append. ad Præf.*, p. xlii.
[132] See p. 400.

without success; for he obtained from his friend the restitution of sixty prisoners, whom he himself accompanied back to Ireland. He returned on more than one occasion to visit King Aldfrid, whose literary tastes resembled his own. He dedicated to him his description of the holy places, which he compiled from the narratives of a Gallo-Frankish bishop called Arculfe, who, returning from Palestine by sea, had been shipwrecked on the coast of Ireland, from whence he had gone to visit the still celebrated sanctuary of Iona. Thanks to the liberality of the learned King Aldfrid, whose taste for geographical studies we have already remarked, a great number of copies were made of this treatise, that it might be largely distributed and read even by the lower classes.[133]

It was during these journeys to and fro that the cultivated and fervent abbot,[134] learned to understand the new customs introduced into the Anglo-Saxon Church by the efforts of Wilfrid, and although there is no trace in his life of any actual encounter between him and the great champion of Roman unity, it is certain that Adamnan, while in Northumbria, was so thoroughly moved by the spirit there diffused by Wilfrid, that he left the country with the resolution of henceforward preferring the rites of the universal Church to those of a little nation at the end of the world.[135] Ceolfrid did much to enlighten him on this point; in his letter to the King of the Picts he relates the visit of Adamnan to Wearmouth, and their conferences on the subject of the tonsure. "Holy brother," said the Northumbrian abbot to the Irish prelate, "you aspire to an immortal crown, why do you wear on your head so imperfect an image of it? and if you desire the society of St. Peter, why do you bear the tonsure of him who anathematized St. Peter?" "Beloved brother," answered Adamnan, "if I bear the tonsure of Simon the Magician, according to the custom of my country, do not think that I detest the less the Simoniacal heresy. I desire to follow with my best powers the footsteps of the Prince of Apostles."

[133] "Per ejus eis largitionem etiam minoribus ad legendum contraditus." — BEDE, v. 15. Bede has inserted many extracts of this description in his History; Mabillon publishes it entire at the end of vol. iv. of his *Acta Sanctorum*.

[134] "Erat vir bonus et sapiens et scientia scripturarum nobilissime instructus . . . abbas et sacerdos Columbiensium egregius." — *Ibid.*, v. 16, 21.

[135] "Cum videret ritus ecclesiæ canonicos . . . in ecclesiis Anglorum . . . cum suis paucissimus et in extremo mundi angulo positis . . . mutatus mente est." — *Ibid.*, c. 15.

"I believe it," said Ceolfrid, "but in that case it would be best to wear openly the mark of the Apostle Peter which you have in your heart."[136] It is apparent by this that the leader of the Irish Church did not even dispute the imputed origin, at once fabulous and injurious, of his national custom.

He attempts in vain to lead back the monks of Iona to Roman usage.

But when, on his return to Iona, he attempted to lead the children of St. Columba to his new conviction and to the Roman rule, he encountered an unconquerable resistance. To be treated as barbarians and rustics[137] by the Northumbrian monks and doctors troubled them little; they were aware that their spiritual ancestors had been initiated into the Christian faith two centuries before the Anglo-Saxons, who for the most part had been drawn out of the darkness of paganism only by the apostolic self-devotion of those whom their descendants disdained. The Celts, accordingly, adhered obstinately to the traditional rites of their glorious ancestors. When they saw their chief return with the Roman tonsure, the surprise and indignation of the monks of Iona were such that they have found form in an Irish legend.[138] The difference between the superior and the community became so painful that Adamnan, who was of a humble and peaceable character, could not hold head against it. Without abdicating, he yet ceased to live in his monastery, and passed a great part of the remainder of his life in Ireland.[139] He dedicated himself with ardor to the work of reunion, meeting there with much greater success than in his own community. Southern Ireland, as has been seen, had already returned to Roman unity, even before Wilfrid undertook his great work

[136] "Scias pro certo . . . quia etsi Simonis tonsuram ex consuetudine patria habeam, simoniacam tamen perfidiam tota mente detestor ac respuo." — Bede, v. 21.

[137] *Ibid.*, iii. 4.

[138] Mac Firbis or Forbes. — *Irish Annals*, MS. quoted by Reeves, p. xli.

[139] The annals of Ireland give his presence there in 692 and 697. At the latter date he gave forth the *Law of Innocents*, or of Adamnan (see above, p. 128). His books were written in the midst of his journeys and pastoral cares, as he says in the preamble of his treatise *De Locis Sanctis*: "Quæ et ego, quamlibet inter laboriosas et prope insustentabiles tota die undique conglobatas ecclesiasticas sollicitudines constitutus, vili quamvis sermone descripens declaravi." He wrote his *Life of St. Columba* between his two journeys from Ireland, from 692 to 697. He says nothing in it of his difference with his own monks in respect to Easter, but he mentions the prophecy of Columba at Clonmacnoise upon discord: "Quæ post dies multos ob diversitatem Paschalis festi orta est inter Scotiæ ecclesias." He remained in Ireland probably from 697 to 703, a period at which, according to Bede, he was still there. It was not too much for the difficult task he had to fulfil.

in England. Adamnan was the means of bringing back central and northern Ireland to the same rule. He procured the triumph specially of the Roman Easter and the orthodox tonsure, except in the communities directly under the sway of his own monastery at Iona. This victory was not won without great difficulty, but his gentleness and modesty triumphed over all.[140] He died the same year as his friend, the wise King Aldfrid. Before his death, and after having celebrated in Ireland the canonical Easter, he made a last attempt to win over the family of Columba, which he had governed for thirty years. It was in vain; all his entreaties were repulsed; but God graciously granted, says Bede, that this man, who loved unity and peace above everything, should attain to eternal life before the return of the paschal solemnity made the discord between himself and his disobedient monks notorious.[141]

His death. 23d Sept., 704 or 705.

The victory which Adamnan, the countryman and successor of St. Columba, could not gain, was reserved for a man of another race but equal holiness — the Anglo-Saxon Egbert. The life of this monk is an example of the numerous and salutary relations which existed between the Irish Celts and the Anglo-Saxons, and which had been so odiously disturbed by the inexcusable invasion of the Northumbrian king Egfrid. It is in connection with this invasion that the name of Egbert has already appeared in this narrative.[142] He was one of the many English who crossed the sea in numbers so considerable as to fill entire fleets, and who threw themselves upon the Irish shore like flights of bees, to enjoy the hospitality, both intellectual and material, of the Irish monasteries; while, on the other hand, the Greek Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England, lived, by a happy exchange of brotherly kindness, surrounded by a crowd of young Irish monks. Some of the Anglo-Saxons, who sought a superior ascetic education in the Irish monasteries, returned to England, frequently filling places of the highest dignity there, and edifying their countrymen by their knowledge and vir-

Iona is, however, brought back to unity by the Anglo-Saxon, Egbert, 716-729.

[140] "Prædicans eis modesta exhortatione . . . pene omnes qui ab Hiiensium dominio erant liberi, ab errore avito correctos ad unitatem reduxit catholicam." — Bede, v. 15.

[141] Adamnan has always been venerated as a saint. See the article upon him, Bolland., vol. vii. Sept., 24th, and the Breviary of Aberdeen. It is asserted that he ate only twice in the week — Sunday and Thursday. — *Ann. des Quatre Maitres*, ap. Reeves, p. lvii.

[142] See p. 401.

tue;[143] while others remained, casting in their lot forever with the monastic ranks of Ireland.

Austere and holy life of Egbert in Ireland. 635-735.

Egbert stood in the first rank of those numerous scions of the Anglo-Saxon nobility who in their youth became voluntary exiles for Christ, in order to devote themselves in Ireland, far from their relations and their possessions, to a life of penitence, and, above all, to the study of the Holy Scriptures.[144] He was only twenty-five when the terrible pestilence broke out which, immediately after the first triumph of Wilfrid at the conference of Whitby, made such cruel ravages in the British Isles. He was then with several of his countrymen, in a monastery, the site of which is at present represented by the picturesque ruins of Mellifont; he saw his companions dying around him daily, and when at last he was himself affected by the contagion, he had strength enough to leave the infirmary, and withdraw to a solitary place to review his life and weep over his sins. He had even the courage to pray God to spare his life until he had expiated the faults of his youth by good works, and made a vow if his prayer was granted to remain an exile forever and return to England no more. He then went in and lay down again, beside another young man, his closest and most intimate friend, who was mortally stricken, and lay in a sleep that was almost death. All at once the young sufferer awoke. "Ah, brother Egbert, what have you done?" he said. "I hoped so that we should have entered eternal life together; and now you let me die without you: know at least that your prayer is granted." The young man died that night; but Egbert survived for sixty-five years, and became a model of all monastic virtues. Not only did he call forth the affectionate admiration of his Anglo-Saxon countrymen, but even in Ireland, so fertile in marvels of holiness, he appeared an eminent saint. He emulated the most illustrious in his zeal for knowledge, in his eagerness to distribute to

He loses his most intimate friend, who reproaches him for wishing to live without him.

[143] Among others, Ceadda, the first rival of Wilfrid at York, and Ædilwin, of whom Bede says: "Ipse Hiberniam *gratia legendi* adiit, et bene instructus patriam rediit, atque episcopus in provincia Lindissi factus, multo ecclesiam tempore nobilissime rexit." — *Hist. Eccles.*, iii. 27. See what has been already said (p. 506, note) of the elder brother of Abbot Ceolfrid of Yarrow.

[144] "In Hibernia diutius exulaverat pro Christo . . . doctissimus in scripturis et longæ vitæ perfectione eximius. . . . De nobilibus Anglorum. . . . Quem peregrinam ducere vitam pro adipiscenda in cœlis patria retulimus." — *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 9.

the poor the gifts lavished upon him by the rich, and in the austerities of his life. The great historian of the Christian glories of the Anglo-Saxon race has not disdained to inform us that during Lent, and even for forty days after Christmas, and fifty days after Whitsuntide, his entire nourishment consisted of a little bread, with milk from which the cream had been carefully removed. It was at this price that the right of speaking with authority to the nations, and of walking before them in the way of salvation, was purchased.[145]

He uses his influence over the Anglo-Saxons to send them as missionaries into Germany.

He employed his influence over the two races which rivalled each other in honoring his holiness, only for their good, their honor, and the general welfare of the Church. Though he did not succeed, notwithstanding his entreaties, in turning Egfrid, the king of his native Northumbria, from the crime of his abominable invasion of Ireland, he was more fortunate with others of his countrymen, whom he transformed into missionaries of the faith to the Germans. In his ascetic exile in Ireland he was the first of the Anglo-Saxons to conceive the generous, the divine idea of sending to the help of the mother-country, to Germany, which still belonged to Satan, the sons of her Britannic colony to show her the path of virtue and of life.[146] He knew well whence it was that his Anglo-Saxon ancestors had come, and that they had left behind them in darkness a crowd of other tribes, of the same stock and language, whose image stole upon his imagination, as did that of the little Irish children whose plaintive voices St. Patrick heard in his dreams, and whose visionary appeals decided that saint, once a slave, to become the apostle of their country.[147]

[145] "Egressus est tempore matutino de cubiculo in quo infirmi quiescebant . . . finitis lacrymis, precibus et votis. . . . Expergefactus sodalis respexit eum. . . . O frater Ecgbert, O quid fecisti? Sperabam quia pariter ad vitam æternam intraremus. . . . Unde et genti suæ et illis in quibus exulabat nationibus Scottorum sive Pictorum exemplo vivendi . . . multum profuit. . . . Quod lac pridie novum in phialia ponere solebat, et post noctem ablata superficie crassiore, ipse residuum cum modico pane bibebat." — Bede, iii. 27. Bede, who is always careful to cite his authorities, informs us that he gathered all these particulars from a priest, "veracissimus et venerandæ canitiei," to whom Egbert had narrated his life. Bede, who was born in 673, was more than fifty when Egbert died.

[146] "In Germania plurimas noverat esse nationes, a quibus Angli vel Saxones qui nunc Britanniam incolunt, genus et originem duxisse noscuntur. . . . Sunt autem Fresones, Rugini, Dani, Huni, antiqui Saxones, Boructuarii. . . . Christi miles circumnavigata Britannia disposuit si quos forte ex illis ereptos Satanæ ad Christum transferre valeret." — Bede, v. 9.

[147] See vol. i. p. 544.

Faithful to the vow which forbade him to land, even in passing, upon the soil of his native island, Egbert chartered a ship to take him direct from Ireland to Friesland, on the northern coast of Germany. But as he was about to embark, one of his travelling companions, who had been a monk at Melrose, lying down to sleep after matins, saw in a dream the prior Boswell, the tender friend of Cuthbert,[148] and beloved master of the novices at Melrose, one of the great saints of the Celtic Church in Northumbria, who charged him to warn Egbert that the will of God ordained him to give up his Germanic mission, and to devote himself, willingly or unwillingly, to the instruction and conversion of the Columbite monasteries. "Their ploughs do not go straight," said the prior to his former pupil; "they must be put back into the right furrow."[149] This dream, though twice repeated, made no impression upon Egbert; but his ship having been cast ashore, he acknowledged the will of God, and gave up his cherished project, so far as related to himself. As many, however, of the fervent and zealous monks among his own countrymen whom he could move to such a determination he sent in his place; when any returned discouraged by their want of success, he sought and found others more capable or more fortunate; and it was thus the beginning made by Egbert that gave to Germany Vicbert, Willibrord, Swidbert, the two Ewalds, and other holy bishops or abbots, whose names are justly venerated by Germany as her apostles, and whom we shall find again in the history of that country if it is permitted to us to pursue our task so far.

Egbert leads back the monks of Iona to the unity of the Roman ritual.

It was in the year of Ceolfrid's death, eleven years after the death of Adamnan, and seven years after that of Wilfrid, that the Anglo-Saxon Egbert succeeded in overcoming the most obstinate stronghold of Celtic dissidence, and procured the triumph of Roman unity in the monastic metropolis which had been founded by the most illustrious saint of the Celtic Church. A stranger of an alien and often hostile race thus accomplished the task in which Adamnan had failed. He was from the first received by the monks of Iona with the

[148] See pp. 459 and 469.

[149] "Cum expletis hymnis matutinalibus in lectulo membra posuissem . . . apparuit magister quondam meus et nutritor amantissimus. . . . Vade et dic illis quia, velit nolit, debet ad monasteria Columbæ venire, quia aratra eorum non recte incedunt." — Bede, v. 9.

greatest respect; and, employing no means but those afforded him by the delightful suavity of his disposition, the soft and persevering influence of his conversation, and, above all, the example of a life so perfectly conformed to his doctrine, he triumphed over the inveterate dislike of the sons of St. Columba for that innovation which was to reunite them to the rest of Christendom. It is not probable that he succeeded at once, since he lived for the thirteen last years of his life at Iona, in the long famous island which he hoped to crown with a new glory by bringing it back into the orbit of Catholic unity. But his victory was complete and final.

He dies there on Easter-day, 24th April, 729.

He died at the age of ninety on Easter-day, the regular celebration of which had preoccupied, excited, and agitated so many saints before him. It fell, in the year of his death, on the 24th April — that is to say, on a day when it had never been and never could be observed, according to the computation followed by the Irish. After having commenced, along with his brethren whom he had the joy to lead back to Catholic unity, to celebrate on earth the greatest solemnity of the liturgical year, he went to complete it in heaven with our Lord, the holy Apostles, and all the citizens of the celestial country, where the eternal celebration ceases no more.[150]

All the monasteries subordinate to Iona followed the example of their metropolitan community in the adoption of the Roman Easter and the orthodox tonsure. There is ground for believing that they accepted at the same time the Benedictine rule, since none of the numerous monks and missionaries sent forth by them into France, and specially into Germany, carried any other rules with them than those of the order of St. Benedict.[151]

Ireland thus found itself entirely brought under the laws of Roman discipline. It was by her action, and in her southern provinces, that the first movement of return to unity[152] — a movement carried out by Adamnan with, except in Iona and its dependencies, universal success — had been begun

[150] "Doctor suavissimus . . . libenter auditus ab universis, immutavit piis ac sedulis exhortationibus inveteratam illam traditionem parentum eorum. . . . In insula quam ipse velut nova quadam relucente gratia ecclesiasticæ societatis et pacis Christi conseeraverat . . . gaudium summæ festivitatis quod cum fratribus quos ad unitatis gratiam converterat, inchoavit, cum Domino et apostolis cæterisque cœli civibus complevit, immo idipsum celebrare sine fine non desinit." — Bede, v. 22.

[151] Mabillon, in *Præfat. III. Sec. Bened.*, No. 16.

[152] See p. 316.

by the Council of 634. The country most distant and least accessible to Roman influence, withdrawn behind Wales and the sea, which made a double rampart for her, was thus the first conquest of the principle of unity.[153] Caledonia, the modern Scotland, represented by the Picts, the farthest north and most untamable of all the populations of the British Isles, soon followed. And, finally, Iona herself yielded, increasing, by all the numerous family of Columb-kill, the crowded ranks of faithful and obedient children in the Roman Church.[154]

The Britons of Cambria alone resisted; they, the nearest of all, exposed every day to the example, efforts, and persuasions of the orthodox, alone persisted in the customs which they had refused to sacrifice to Augustin. Bede, the illustrious contemporary of those last struggles, grows indignant over this insurmountable obstinacy. He contrasts it with the docility of the Irish and Scotch, and attempts to explain the causes of the difference.[155] "The Scottish nation," he says, "communicated frankly and generously to the Anglo-Saxons, by the ministrations of Aïdan and other missionaries, the truth as far as she knew it; in return, she owes to the Anglo-Saxons the perfect order and regularity which were wanting to her. But the Britons, who had never wished to reveal the Christian religion to the Anglo-Saxons, bury themselves deeper and deeper in their error, now that the English are initiated into all the verities of the Catholic faith. They hold high their tonsured heads, but not in the form of a crown; and they profess to celebrate the Christian solemnities while separating themselves from the Church of Christ."[156]

The Britons of Cambria alone remain obstinately dissident in respect to Easter.

[153] Varin, Memoir already quoted.

[154] It must be acknowledged that from this moment the influence of this celebrated sanctuary went on diminishing, though it still remained much beyond that of the rest of the Celtic Church.

[155] He admits, however, that in the time of Adamnan the example of Ireland was contagious for a certain number of Britons, v. 17: "Plurima pars Scottorum in Hibernia, *et nonnulla etiam de Britonibus in Britannia*, ecclesiasticum paschalis observantiæ tempus suscepit." The Britons of Cumberland and of Strathclyde, who were more directly under the influence and authority of Northumbrian kings and pontiffs, are probably referred to in this passage.

[156] "Ipsi adhuc inveterati et claudicantes in semitis suis, et capita sine corona prætendunt et solemnia Christi sine Ecclesiæ Christi societate venerantur." — Bede, v. 22.

Real motive for their resistance.

A little reflection ought to have been sufficient to convince the honest Bede that some other motive than prejudice or religious passion had to do with the infatuated resistance of the Britons; it was the patriotic sentiment which the Anglo-Saxons had mortally wounded, and which Bede himself, like a true Englishman, does not seem to have been able to comprehend as existing in the victims of Saxon invasion. The Anglo-Saxons had never attacked Ireland before the passing incursion of Egfrid. They fought only by intervals, or held themselves upon the defensive against the Picts and Scots of Scotland: while against the Britons war and conflict were perpetual. This war dated from the first landing of the Saxons. It had begun long before the mission of Augustin, and had lasted for three centuries when Bede wrote.[157] It was not then the doctrines or usages of Rome, it was the ecclesiastical supremacy and moral invasion of the Saxons, which the remnant of the British nation, withdrawn within its inaccessible stronghold of Cambria, repelled with the energy of desperation. For a century and a half, up to the moment of Augustin's arrival, religion and patriotism had borne an equal part in their horror for the pagan barbarians who had come first to waste, and then to take possession of their native island. They had seen, with equal distrust and repugnance, these savage invaders, whose eternal damnation seemed to them a sort of consolatory justice, gradually introduced into the fold of the Church. By maintaining their ancient customs, by celebrating Easter at a different date, by seeing on the shaven brows of their clergy the distinctive sign of their independent origin and tradition, they testified their incredulity of the Christianity of their enemies, and raised a supreme protest in favor of their own vanquished but not extirpated nationality, before God and man.[158]

[157] Varin, Memoir already quoted.

[158] This is called by Bede, in language too like that which Muscovite writers of our own day employ in respect to the Poles, *a domestic and immoral hatred*: "Britones maxima ex parte domestico sibi odio gentem Anglorum et totius Ecclesiæ catholicæ statum Pascha, minus recte *moribusque improbis* pugnant." There is no just reason for imputing to the British Christians a lower rate of morals than those of the Saxon converts; but our venerable historian, blinded by his passions and prejudices, goes still further, and yields, as so many have done after him, to the hateful temptation of identifying the work of God with a human conquest: "Tamen et divina sibi et humana prorsus resistente virtute, in neutro cupitum possunt obtinere propositum: quippe qui quamvis ex parte sui sunt juris, nonnulla tamen ex parte Anglorum sunt servitio mancipati." — v. 23. He says elsewhere (v. 18) that

Attempts of St. Aldhelm to bring back the Britons to unity.

709.

While Wilfrid consumed his life, in the north of England, in a struggle against the enmities which probably fomented and aggravated the opposition of the Celts to his innovations, a celebrated monk named Aldhelm, about his own age, and who died in the same year, distinguished himself by his efforts to lead back the Britons who were subjects of the kingdom of Wessex, or lived on its borders, to Roman unity, as well as to extend and consolidate the Christian faith among the Western Saxons. His fame was too great in the middle ages, and he has been too often quoted in our own day among the pioneers of literature, to be passed over by us without remark.[159] He was descended from that powerful race of Cerdic which traced its genealogy up to the god Woden or Odin,[160] and which reigned over the Saxons of the West until the moment came when it united all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy under its dominion. Aldhelm, who had been devoted from his youth to religious and literary studies, was soon attracted by a school which had just risen in his native kingdom, and of which he was destined to become the principal glory. A Scottish monk named Maïdulf, moved by the same impulse which led so many Anglo-Saxons to the cloisters and hermitages of Ireland, had come to England to seek a solitude where he could pray and study in peace. He established himself in an immense forest upon the borders of Wessex and Mercia, and lived there as a hermit, sheltered by a hut which he had been allowed to build under the walls of an old castle, a place which had come into the possession of the Saxon kings after having been the dwelling of British chiefs, and was the sole

His royal birth and education, half Roman half Celtic, 645 (?) 675.

St. Aldhelm wrote: "Librum egregium adversus errorem Britonum, quo vel Pascha non suo tempore celebrant, vel alia *perplura ecclesiasticæ castitati et paci* contraria gerunt." In all Aldhelm's writings that have been preserved to us there is not the least allusion to the irregular morals of the Celtic clergy.

[159] Except certain lines in Bede (v. 18), and the biographical details which have been found in Aldhelm's works, we have no contemporary information as to his life. But William of Malmesbury, in the twelfth century, and before him another monk, Faricius, a member of the great monastery of which Aldhelm had been abbot, compiled two separate biographies of the saint, from the traditions of their community. The work of William, which is very curious, has been published by Mabillon and the Bollandists in an abridged form, which was all they themselves knew of it. The complete text is to be found only in the *Anglia Sacra* of Wharton, vol. ii. The literary position of Aldhelm has been ably examined by Lingard (*Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. ii.) and Ozanam (*Etudes Germaniques*, vol. ii. 489).

[160] *Chron. Saxon.*, ad. ann. 552.

remnant of a British town which the Teutonic conquerors had destroyed.[161] The Celtic solitary, to provide himself with the means of living, opened a school. Any man in our day, in any country in the world except the Far West of America, who should open a school in a wood, would run great risk of dying there of hunger. But at that time such a thirst for instruction had arisen among the Anglo-Saxons, and the fountains at which they could satisfy it were so rare, that the speculation of Maïdulf succeeded perfectly. Scholars came to him in sufficient numbers to enable him shortly to form a community, and among the rest came Aldhelm, first as a pupil and afterwards as a monk.[162] He remained there for fifteen years, was elected abbot on the death of Maïdulf, and by his exertions the foundation of the Celtic anchorite became one of the principal monasteries in England, still, however, bearing the name of the old and saintly stranger whom the Celts were always proud to remember they had given as a master to the great Aldhelm.[163]

He becomes Abbot of Malmesbury.

Before, however, he was called to rule his disciples, Aldhelm desired to have the advantage of other instructions than those of his Celtic master. He went repeatedly to Canterbury,[164] where the great monastic schools had taken new life under that Abbot Adrian whom we have already so often referred to, and who had come from Africa with the Asiatic Archbishop Theodore, to preside over the Catholic education of the Anglo-Saxons. This eminent man, described by a monastic historian four centuries after his death as the master of masters, the fountain-head and centre of letters and arts, gained the heart of Aldhelm by developing the fulness of his intelligence. The young West Saxon came out of the hands of his African preceptor furnished with all which then constituted

His studies at Canterbury.

669.

[161] *Liber Antiquitatum Meldunensis Cœnobii*, ap. DUGDALE, *Monasticon*. The remembrance of this catastrophe appears to survive in the modern name of *Broken-borough*, not far from Malmesbury.

[162] "Deficientibus necessariis scholares in discipulatum accepit ut eorum liberalitate victus tenuitatem corrigeret. Illi procedenti tempore magistri sequaces ex scholaribus monachi effecti, in conventum non exiguum coaluere." — GEILL. MALMESB., *Vita Aldhelmi*, ap. WHARTON, page 3.

[163] *Maildulf's burgh*, whence Malmesbury. "Abbas monasterii quod Maildufi urbem nuncupavit." — BEDE, v. 18. "A quodam sancto viro de nostro genere nutritus es." — *Epist. Scoti Anonym.*, ap. GILES, p. 98.

[164] It is difficult to conceive how William of Malmesbury could attribute the first training of Aldhelm to the Abbot Adrian. Aldhelm, who died a septuagenarian in 709, must have been at least twenty in 669, the year in which Adrian landed in England. Besides, it is proved that Aldhelm made two distinct visits to Canterbury.

a course of literary and religious instruction.[165] During his entire life he retained a grateful recollection of his teacher, and took pleasure in dating the true birth of his mind from his residence at Canterbury. "It is you, my beloved," he wrote to Adrian, "who have been the venerable teacher of my rude infancy, it is you whom I embrace with the effusion of a pure tenderness, longing much to return to you."[166]

His great literary reputation.

It was thus at Canterbury that Aldhelm acquired that profound knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, that love of Greek, Latin and Hebrew, these literary tastes and habits, which gained him the first place in the universal admiration of his countrymen. Not only contemporaries, such as Bede,[167] but their distant descendants, offered him a homage which has attracted the unaccustomed attention of several modern writers. I am aware that he is the first Saxon whose writings have been preserved,[168] the first man of Teutonic race who cultivated the Latin muse, as he boasts in applying to himself while still very young these lines of Virgil: —

> "Primus ego in patriam mecum, modo vita supersit,
> Aonio rediens deducam vertice Musas.
> Primus Idumæas referam tibi, Mantua, palmas."

But I cannot but think that his literary importance has been singularly exaggerated. Of all the Fathers of the Church, or even of ecclesiastical writers generally, I know none whose productions are more wearisome. He has neither the fiery originality of Ceadmon nor the eloquent and elegant simplicity of Bede. He is certainly well-informed for his time, and is not without a certain warmth of feeling when his mind is not frozen by pedantic formalism. Sometimes he applies happily texts from the Bible, and in his famous essays in prose and verse upon virgins and virginity he shows himself thoroughly instructed in sacred and ecclesiastical history. His verses, rhymed and unrhymed, are a little better than his

[165] "Quem in arcem scientiæ stetisse qui Anglorum gesta perleget, intelliget. . . . Fons liberarum vivus artium." — GUILL. MALMESB., p. 3.

[166] "Reverendissimo patri meæque rudis infantiæ venerando præceptori. . . . Mi charissime, quem gratia puræ dilectionis amplector." — ALDHELMI *Opera*, p. 330, ed. Giles.

[167] "Vir undecumque doctissimus: nam et sermone nitidus, et scripturarum tam liberalium quam ecclesiasticarum erat eruditione mirandus." — BEDE, v. 18.

[168] "Constat neminem nostræ stirpis prosapia genitum, et Germanicæ gentis cunabulis confotum, in hujuscemodi negocio ante nostram mediocritatem tantopere desudasse." — *Epist. ad Acircium*, ed. Giles, p. 327.

prose, but still are destitute of any special charm or brilliancy, notwithstanding the pompous affectation of his images and metaphors. But in verse and in prose, this Teuton, in whom it would be pleasant to find something wild and primitive, delights in literary sleight-of-hand, in acrostics, in enigmas, in alliterations, in a play upon words, and a childish and grotesque redundance of expression [169] — in short, in all the paltry refinements of the Greek and Latin decadence.

His Anglo-Saxon songs intended to take the place of sermons.

We should judge him no doubt more leniently if we were acquainted with his Anglo-Saxon works, which must have contributed largely to his popular reputation. But of these there remains to us only a vague recollection, associated with the most curious and touching feature of his youth. What would not one give to have the actual text of those canticles and ballads which he sang upon the bridges and at the wayside corners, lying in wait for the Saxon peasants who left church in haste as soon as mass was over to avoid the sermon? Appearing before them as a musician, one of their ordinary bards, he attempted no doubt to teach them, under that popular and fascinating form of utterance, the same truths of religion which it wearied them to hear from the pulpit.[170] These songs in the vernacular tongue retained their popularity for several centuries, and gained for Aldhelm the honor of being proclaimed prince of Anglo-Saxon poetry by the great King Alfred.

Literary life in the Saxon cloisters in the seventh century.

The most striking particular in the history and writings of Aldhelm is the view they afford us of the literary and intellectual life, developed as it were in a moment, in the Saxon cloisters, almost before their completion, by an inspiring breath, at once Catholic and classic, from Italy and the East. The same phenomenon had been apparent two centuries earlier in the Irish monasteries under an inspiration more original but less easy to

[169] I refer those who may think me too severe, and who may not have at hand the convenient volume published by Dr. Giles, to the extracts from St. Aldhelm given by Lingard and Ozanam.

[170] "Litteris ad plenum instructus, nativæ quoque linguæ non negligebat carmina, adeo ut, teste libro Ælfredi . . . nulla unquam ætate par fuerit quisquam, poesim Anglicam posse facere vel canere. . . . Carmen triviale quod adhuc vulgo cantitatur fecisse. . . . Populum eo tempore semi-barbarum, parum divinis sermonibus intentum statim cantatis missis domos cursitare solitum; ideo sanctum virum super pontem qui rura et urbem continuat, abeuntibus se opposuisse obicem, quasi artem canendi professum. . . . Hoc commento sensim inter ludicra verbis scripturarum insertis, cives ad sanitatem reduxisse." — Guill. Malmesb., p. 4.

study. This literary life had its clouds and its pettinesses, its pretentious and affected aspect. But such a blossoming of human thought, of study and knowledge, of poetry and eloquence, in the bosom of a barbarous and warlike race, still apparently absorbed by war, invasions, dynastic and domestic revolutions, and all the storms and blunders which characterize the childhood of society, is not the less a great and wonderful sight.

Extent and variety of Aldhelm's knowledge.

The good and evil sides of this development could not be better manifested than in the person of St. Aldhelm, and especially in the extent and variety of his information. He was an excellent musician, and studied eagerly all the instruments known in his day.[171] What was still more rare, he had studied Roman law,[172] happily ignored by all the other Anglo-Saxon monks and men of letters, even including the Venerable Bede, whose learning seemed universal. He was acquainted, as has been seen, with the three sacred languages, and knew enough of Hebrew to read the Bible in the original. He not only read Greek, but spoke and pronounced it like an ancient Greek, according to the two professors whom King Ina, cousin of Aldhelm, brought from Greece to aid him in his studies. As for Latin, it occupied him only too much. He makes wearisome dissertations upon the minute details of grammar, prosody, and metrical rules, and quotes to extremity Virgil and Lucan, Persius and Terence, Horace and Juvenal: he even quotes Juvencus and the Priapeia!

His constant solicitude for souls.

At the same time, his literary or classical occupations never made him lose sight of the exigencies or perils of the soul. In a letter which has been often quoted, he warns one of his countrymen who was going to study in Ireland against the dangers of pagan philosophy, and, above all, of mythology. "What fruit," he asks, "can orthodox truth derive from the studies of a man who spends his strength in examining into the incests of the impure Proserpine, the adventures of the petulant Hermione, the bacchanals of Lupercus, or the parasites of Priapus? All that

[171] "Omnia instrumenta quæ fidibus vel fistulis aut aliis varietatibus melodiæ fieri possunt . . . in quotidiano usu habuit." — FARICIUS, *Vita Aldhelm.*, ap. BOLLAND., t. vi. Maii, p. 83.

[172] He himself states this in a letter to his predecessor Hedda, ed. Giles, p. 96. Compare LAPPENBERG, i. 196. I do not know how Palgrave discovered the existence somewhere of a manuscript treatise of Aldhelm upon Roman law, which, in 1832, he hoped soon to publish.

has vanished; it has become as nothing before the Cross, victorious over death."[173]

This anxiety for the salvation of souls, which he gives as the motive of all his works, reveals itself especially in his correspondence. For example, here are certain expressions in a letter which might have been addressed yesterday to the youth, half clerical, half noble, of the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge — so unchanging is the Anglo-Saxon nature in its vices as in its virtues: "Dear Ethelwald, who are at once my son and my disciple, you are still very young; but, I entreat you, do not let yourself be too much in bondage to the vain pleasures of this world. Avoid carefully daily excesses in drinking, long and endless repasts, even riding-parties too much prolonged, and every other miserable sensual delight.[174] I implore you also not to let yourself be overcome by the love of money or of vain glory, or by that secular boasting which is odious to God. Consecrate rather your time, my beloved, to the study of the Scriptures and to prayer; and if you wish, in addition, to study secular literature, do it with the special intention of understanding better the sacred text, the meaning of which depends almost everywhere on the understanding of the rules of grammar. Put this letter among your other books, that you may read it over and over again."

In dedicating his voluminous treatise on Latin versification, after twenty years' absence, to the chief[175] of a Northumbrian or Scottish tribe who had been his companion in his studies, and had become his spiritual son, he insists warmly that the poor prince, whom he calls his "very reverend son," should consider it a duty to read the wearisome volume from beginning to end. He expatiates at length upon the trouble which his production had cost him in the midst of his pastoral cares, and the convulsions of the age. "It would be absurd," he says, "if you did not take the trouble to eat

[173] "Quidnam, rogitum quæso, orthodoxæ fidei sacramento commodi affert circa temeratum spurcæ Proserpinæ incestum . . . enucleate legendo scrutendoque sordescere . . . quæ . . . alma mortis morte stipite patibuli affixa, solo tenus diruta evanuere." — *Epist. ad Wilfrid.*, ed. Giles, p. 337.

[174] "Sive in quotidianis potationibus et conviviis usu frequentiore ac prolixiore inhoneste superfluis, sive in equitandi vagatione culpabili. . . . Seu in quibuslibet corporeæ delectationis voluptatibus execrandis. . . . Multo magis, mi amantissime, vel lectionibus divinis, vel orationibus sacris semper invigila." — P. 332, ed. Giles.

[175] It is not known who this Acircius was, whom he describes pompously as "Aquilonalis imperii sceptra gubernanti," but whom he reminds that they contracted in their youth "inextricabile conglutinati fœderis pignus."

what I have taken so much pains to grind and make into bread."[176] Then he invokes the example of the great Emperor Theodosius, who, while ruling the world, found time to copy the eighteen books of the grammarian Priscian. But he adds: "Let not the sound of the trumpet of the last judgment depart from your ears; let it recall to you day and night the book of the law, which ought to be meditated day and night. You will never sin if you think always of your last end. What is our prosperity here below? a dream, a vapor, the foam on the sea. God grant that the possession of present good may not hold to us the place of future recompense, and that the abundance of that which perishes may not be followed by the dearth of that which endures. I ask this for you and for myself, from Him who for us has hung upon the cross."[177]

The rare fragments of his correspondence are at the same time the only evidence by which the heart of Aldhelm can be estimated: and his heart seems to us to have been much superior to his intelligence. A tenderness and kindness are here visible, which, in the person of a monk of barbarous race, are much more touching and attractive than all his rhetoric and learning. We perceive with pleasure that his soul was neither inflated nor disturbed by his great and increasing reputation, nor by the crowd of disciples and admirers who came to him, not only from the Britannic Isles, but also from Greece and Spain. He continued always the same mild and affectionate spirit which, while passionately studying prosody, astronomy, and Roman law, at Canterbury, wrote to his bishop lamenting that he could not celebrate Christmas in the joyous company of his brethren of Malmesbury, and charging him to salute tenderly in his name all the brethren, from the first to the last.[178]

His popularity.

These features of his character explain the great popularity which he enjoyed in his own country. It was such that when he returned from his journeys, he was met not only by a long procession of monks with chants and

[176] "Absurdum nempe arbitror si . . . illud te pigeat velut insolescentem ac delicatum paulatim masticare ac ruminare, quod me non piguit, utpote pistoris pinsentis officio functum, commolere et tollere." — P. 328, ed. Giles.

[177] "Propterea cœlestis tubæ clangor. . . . Utinam caducarum copia, secutarum non sit inopia . . . quod præstare dignetur, qui pro nobis in patibulo pependit." — *Ibid.*

[178] "Fateor me decrevisse. . . . Natalis Domini solemnitatem in consortio fratrum tripudians celebrare. . . . Salutate in Christo omnem sodalium meorum catervam a minimo usque ad maximum."

incense, but also by a crowd of laymen, who formed themselves into a kind of rhythmic dance in his honor.[179]

After this prolonged discussion of the literary position held by Aldhelm, it is necessary to recall to our readers that the great point of interest for us is his monastic life, and his connection with the Celtic dissidents.

His great monastic life.

This indifferent writer was a great monk. He divided his life between study and prayer, but study was for him only a succession of conversations with God. "When I read," he said, "it is God who speaks to me; when I pray, it is to God that I speak."[180] Like his contemporaries, Wilfrid and the holy abbots of the Northumbrian coast, he professed and extended the rule of St. Benedict, whose praises he has written in his poem in honor of Virgins, and whom he does not hesitate to regard as the first author of the conversion of England, his disciples having been its earliest missionaries.[181] He thus substituted the teachings and traditions of Canterbury for the influence of his first Celtic master. This, however, was not prompted by self-indulgence, for he continued, as did Wilfrid himself, faithful to the great austerities which characterized Irish monastic life. Aldhelm imposed upon himself the same extraordinary penances as were habitual to the Celtic monks. To subdue the impulses of the flesh he would plunge during the night into a fountain near the monastery, and there re-

[179] "Venienti occursum est ubique magna pompa, longo apparatu salutantium. . . . Laicorum pars pedibus plaudunt choreas; pars diversis corporum gestibus internas pandunt lætitias." — GUILL. MALMESB., p. 19.

[180] "Lectionibus frequenter, orationibus instanter incumbebat, ut sicut ipse in quadam epistola dicebat, legens Deum alloquentem audiret, orans Deum alloqueretur." — *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[181] We quote the lines for the satisfaction of our readers. They contain the first homage ever offered by a Teutonic pen to St. Benedict and his institution: —

"Temporibus faustus Benedictus claruit isdem,
Quem Deus Ausoniæ clemens indulserat auctor. . . .
Primo qui statuit nostræ certamina vitæ,
Qualiter optatam teneant cœnobia normam,
Quoque modo properet directo tramite sanctus,
Ad supera scandens cœlorum culmina cultor;
Cujus præclaram pandens ab origine vitam
Grægorius præsul chartis descripserat olim,
Donec æthralem felix migraret in arcem.
Hujus alumnorum numero glomeramus ovantes,
Quos gerit in gremio fœcunda Britannia cives,
A quo jam nobis baptismi gratia fluxit,
Atque magistrorum veneranda caterva cucurrit."

De Laudibus Virginum, p. 159.

main immersed to the neck, till he had said the Psalter, and this in winter as in summer. The fountain long retained his name, and the memory of his wonderful austerities.[182] I suppose he is the sole poet, the sole philosopher, of whom such recollections have been preserved.

His zeal for preaching.

But he was far from concentrating his zeal within the narrow enclosure of his monastery. It was he who by his preaching, completed the conquest of Wessex, the kingdom which, a hundred years after his death, was to absorb the other seven kingdoms of the Heptarchy. This work was long and laborious. The people seem to have been Christian only in name: they neither listened to the priests nor attended the churches. Aldhelm employed all the resources of his eloquence to attract them. He even went to the fairs and market-places, mingled with the groups of buyers and sellers, and succeeded, by his persuasive addresses, in making them leave their merchandise for the moment, and follow him to the church, where he fed them with the bread of the divine Word.[183]

He interferes in favor of Wilfrid.

His anxiety for the good of souls and the honor of the Church extended even beyond his native province. He was not indifferent, as were so many other holy bishops and abbots of his time, to the noble struggles of Wilfrid. One of his letters still exists, addressed to the numerous members of Wilfrid's clergy who had abandoned their pontiff in the midst of his trials, and who, during his exile, sought the favor of his persecutors. "I entreat you on my knees," wrote Aldhelm, "not to allow yourselves to be disturbed by the hurricane which has just shaken the foundations of your Church, the sound of which has echoed even to us. If it is needful, take courage to leave the country of your fathers with your bishop, and follow him into exile. What pain, what labor should ever be allowed to separate you from him who has fed you, trained you, carried you in his arms and on his breast, with so tender a charity? . . .

[182] "Ut vim rebelli corpori conscinderet, fonti se humero tenus immergebat. Ibi nec glacialem in hyeme frigorem, nec æstate nebulas ex locis palustribus halantes, curans. . . . Fons ille . . . in valle cœnobii lenibus scatebris fluens." — GUILL. MALMESB., p. 13.

[183] "Illius provinciæ populus, perversus opere, quamvis subditus fidei nostræ, ecclesiam non frequentabat, nec sacerdotum curabat imperium: quem vir blandus verbis monens suavibus. . . . Mercatorum ex diversis patribus multitudo congregabatur maxima: cui pater iste extra urbem veniebat obviando. . . . Quidam eorem . . . pro quibus venerant relinquentes ad tempus mercimonia . . . post hæc . . . repedabant ad propria, animabus suis divino prius officio saginatis." — BOLLAND., t. vi. Maii, p. 85.

Look at the men of the world, who are strangers to all knowledge of divine things. What would be said of laymen, who, after having loved and served their lord in his prosperity, should abandon him when he fell into misfortune and poverty? What would be said of those who should prefer the repose of their own hearths, instead of joining themselves to the misery and exile of their prince? By what a universal explosion of laughter, of contempt, and execration, would not they be overwhelmed? And you too, you priests, what will not be said of you if you allow the bishop who ordained you to go alone into banishment?" [184] We are not informed what was the effect of this letter; but it is not the less curious to behold our Anglo-Saxon abbot, worthy descendant of Odin, invoking to the aid of episcopal authority, and endeavoring to awake in the breasts of his priestly brethren, that tradition of personal devotion, that passionate sentiment of fealty to prince and lord, of which the Anglo-Saxons have left us so many touching examples.

Aldhelm was the true founder of Malmesbury, of which he was abbot for thirty years. It was to him it owed the powerful and popular existence which lasted till an advanced period in the middle ages; and he attracted to it an immense crowd of monks and students.[185] By the grandeur and variety of his buildings, he made it the most magnificent edifice which then existed in England. The sympathy which existed between him and the kings and nobles of Wessex and Mercia procured vast territorial gifts to the monastery situated on the borders of the two kingdoms. The abbatial demesne, which contained only thirty dairies,[186] when he became abbot, included more than four hundred at his death. In order to protect the liberty and property of the community as much as possible from lay or ecclesiastical cupidity, he went to Rome, with the consent of the kings of Mercia and Wessex, and obtained from Pope Sergius I. an act of privilege which placed

He goes to Rome to obtain the privilege of exemption. 687-701.

[184] "Vos viscerales contribulos, flexis genuum poplitibus, subnixa exposco prece. . . . Ecce seculares divinæ scientiæ extorres, si devotum dominum quem in prosperitate dilexerunt . . . deseruerint. . . . Nonne execrabiles cachinni ridiculo et gannaturæ strepitu ab omnibus ducuntur? Quid ergo de vobis dicetur?" etc. — *Epistola ad Clerum Wilfridi Episcopi*, p. 335.

[185] "Currebatur ad Aldhelmum totis semitis: his vitæ sanctimoniam, illis litterarum scientiam desiderantibus. . . . Tunc res monasterii in immensum augeri." — Guill. Malmesb., p. 10.

[186] I translate thus the *cassatos* of William, which I suppose to be equivalent to the more usual term *casata*.

the Monastery of Malmesbury and its dependencies under the special protection of the Holy See, and guaranteed to them an absolute independence of all secular or episcopal authority.[187] When he became a bishop, Aldhelm took pains to have this exemption confirmed, with all requisite solemnity, by his cousin, King Ina.

He becomes a bishop. 705.

For he too became a bishop towards the end of his life, and in spite of all his efforts to be delivered from this burden. On the death of the bishop of the West Saxons, Hedda, the plan of Archbishop Theodore was brought into operation to divide his vast diocese into two. A new bishopric was created at Sherburne, which still, however, was of much too vast extent, since it included almost all the south-west of England to the point of Cornwall, which the West Saxons had not yet completely conquered.[188] Aldhelm was called to this new diocese. After his promotion it was his desire that the monks of his different communities[189] — or, as he said, his families — should proceed, in all freedom, to the election of a new abbot; but they obstinately refused to give him a successor. To his reiterated requests they answered, "As long as you live, we will live with you and under you. But one thing we ask of you unanimously. It is, to guarantee to us, by the Holy Scriptures and the consent of the powerful, that after your death neither king, nor bishop, nor any man whatsoever, ecclesiastic or layman, may exercise over us an authority which we are not willing to accept[190] Aldhelm procured an

[187] The authenticity of the Act given by William has been contested, but the fact of the exemption does not seem doubtful. On this subject the Bollandists say, "Tales exemptiones (from episcopal jurisdiction), licet eo tempore rariores, non omnino inusitatas fuisse ostendit eruditissimus Mabilio, *de Re diplomatica*, l. i. c. 3, ex quibus corrigas quæ alibi forte in contrarium diximus." Our readers will not wish us to enter into the coarse fables, little to the honor of the Papacy, which the biographers of Aldhelm have mingled with the narrative of his journey to Rome, nor to the extraordinary trial which the holy author of the *Eulogy of Virginity*, like Robert d'Arbrissel at a later period, imposed upon himself to prove his victory over his senses. "Quomodo," says Henschenius, with reason, "monacho id credam fuisse permissum?" And it is well to add, as Malmesbury says on another occasion, "Non enim eget Aldhelmus ut mendaciis asseratur."

[188] The seat of the ancient diocese continued at Winchester. That of Sherburne was shortly afterwards transferred to Sarum or Salisbury. It comprehended the six existing counties of Wilts, Berks, Somerset, Dorset, Devonshire, and Cornwall. It was afterwards subdivided, and the two additional dioceses of Bath and Exeter taken from it.

[189] There were three of these — Malmesbury, Frome, and Bradford, the two latter having sprung from the former.

[190] "Abbatem quem sibi spontanea voce familiarum mearum optio, con-

But nevertheless continues Abbot of Malmesbury.

acknowledgment of the perpetual freedom of the monastery, which he continued to rule, from his consin King Ina, from his colleague the Bishop of Winchester, and from all the clergy of Wessex assembled in synod. He then went to Canterbury to be consecrated by the former companion of his studies, the Archbishop Brithwald, successor of the great Theodore.

A curious incident is associated with this journey. When Aldhelm was at Canterbury he learned that ships from France, from the land of the Morins, had touched at Dover. On receiving this news he went to Dover, hoping to find among their cargoes books or other articles of use to his church. And, in fact, he did discover among the merchandise displayed upon the shore many books, and one in particular, of which, after having carefully examined it, he asked the price. The sailors, seeing him so poorly clad, laughed at him, and pushed him roughly away. Soon after a storm broke out, endangering the anchored ship. Aldhelm threw himself into a boat (like the generous sailors in the life-boats at the present day), to aid the crew of the threatened vessel. At his prayer the waves calmed down, and their lives were saved; the sailors, confused and deeply touched, then gave him the book he desired. It was a complete Bible, the Old and New Testaments, which he carried with him as a precious treasure to Malmesbury.[191] This anecdote is not without interest in connection with the history of material and intellectual commerce in England; it shows, too, that so far from interdicting the study of the Bible, as the modern English so blindly accuse her of doing, the Church, from the most primitive times, has neglected no occasion of spreading the knowledge of it.

sona voce elegisset. . . . Ut nullus post obitum tuum nec regalis audacitas, nec pontificalis auctoritas, vel aliquid ecclesiasticæ seu secularis dignitatis vir, sine nostro voluntatis arbitrio, in nobis sibi vindicet principatum." — *Epist. Aldhelmi de Libertate Propriæ Electionis*, ap. GUILL. MALMESB., BOLLAND., and GILES, p. 350.

[191] "Spatiabatur sanctus juxta mare, intentosque oculos mercimoniis infigebat, si quid forte commodum ecclesiastico usui attulissent nautæ qui e Gallico sinu in Angliam provecti librorum copiam apportassent. Conspicatus librum totius Testamenti Veteris et Novi seriem continentem. . . . Cum gnarus folia volveret, pretium effringeret, barbari cum nautica lascivia conviciis aggrediuntur. . . . Mox ipse in scapha ascensa virtute remigum periclitantes adisset, mutata in bonum." — GUILL. MALMESB., p. 20. Cf. BOLLAND, *loco cit.*, p. 8. This Bible was still in existence at Malmesbury in the time of the historian — more than four centuries after the death of Aldhelm.

The episcopate of Aldhelm lasted only four years, which he passed in continual journeys through his vast diocese, preaching day and night. He died in the same year as his master, the famous African abbot, Adrian of Canterbury, and his illustrious contemporary, Wilfrid of York. Death surprised him, as it did the holy apostle of Northumberland,[192] in a village,[193] during one of his apostolic journeys. According to his own desire, he drew his last breath in the little wooden church to which he had come to preach the word of God; the stone on which he laid his dying head was shown long afterwards.

Death of Aldhelm. 25th May, 709.

Such was the man to whom all agree in attributing the principal part in putting down what has been called the schism in the west and south of Great Britain. It is interesting to search out in his writings, as in his life, all the traces of his connection with the Celts. They are, however, few in number, and seem all connected either with his first education under the Celtic Maïdulf, or his consequent literary studies. He receives pompous compliments from several Irishmen, one of whom requests from him the loan of a book, and afterwards that he would receive him as a disciple, sending him a specimen of Latin verses, and announcing that he could easily find horses and a servant for the journey, if Aldhelm's answer was favorable.[194] Another, exiled, as he describes it, in the most distant corner of the Frankish kingdom, beside the tomb of his holy countryman Fursy (at Lagny-sur-Marne), begs him, whom he calls the Archimandrite of the Saxons, to send him his Latin panegyrics.[195] At another time, it is the son

What he did to bring back the Celtic dissidents.

[192] See p. 251.

[193] At Dulting in Somersetshire. "In prædicationibus noctes perinde ac dies continuans, diœceses non segniter circumiens. . . . Lignea erat ecclesia, in qua se ultimum spirans afferre jussit." — Guill. Malmesb., p. 23. Eight centuries after his death his feast was still celebrated at Malmesbury by such a crowd of worshippers that, according to Camden, the presence of a troop of soldiers, *cohors militum*, was necessary to prevent disorder. Then came the Reformation of Henry VIII., with its usual train of devastations. The magnificent church of Malmesbury would have been razed to the ground had not a weaver bought it from the king to establish his looms there. The monastery was sacked. The precious MSS. of his library were long employed to fill up broken windows in the neighboring houses, or to light the bakers' fires. — Maitland's *Dark Ages*, p. 281.

[194] "Domino sancto, sapientissimo, Christo quidem carissimo Aldhelmo Scotus ignoti nominis in Deo æterno salutem," etc. — P. 98, ed. Giles.

[195] "Domino lectricibus ditato studiis mellifluisque ornato lucubratiunculis, Aldhelmo Archimandritæ Saxonum. . . . Cellanus in Hibernensi insula natus, in extremo Francorum limitis latens angulo exul." Aldhelm answers

of a Scottish king, learned in the literature of his time, who sends all his works to Aldhelm, in order that the file of so accomplished a genius may rub off the Scottish rust from them.[196] Then we find him, in his own person, congratulating one of his Anglo-Saxon friends on his return from foggy Ireland, after having studied there for six years. On this occasion he gives us an emphatic picture of the constant journeys of English students, who filled whole fleets going and coming to Ireland, in order to examine deeply, not only into the secrets of grammar, geometry, and physical science, but also into all the different interpretations of Scripture, "as if," he says, "there was a failure of Greek and Latin masters in green and fertile England to explain the obscurities of the celestial library to all who desire to know them." Then he instances his dear master Adrian, of ineffable urbanity, and the metropolitan Theodore, whom he represents surrounded by a troop of Irish disciples, like a wild boar surrounded by a crowd of furious dogs, holding them back, as by strokes of his tusks, by the nervous vigor of his dialectics, and the close ranks of his syllogisms.[197]

In all this there is no allusion to the religious differences which separated the Celts from the Anglo-Saxons, an omission which is of itself a new proof of the reconciliation already effected between the Irish Celts and the Anglo-Saxon clergy, while the British Celts remained obstinate in their distinct and even hostile observances. Since the great victories of the Northumbrian kings it was specially the West Saxons who carried on the struggle against the Britons who had taken refuge in the mountainous peninsulas of Cambria and Cornwall, and whose unwearied resistance was no doubt seconded in an unforeseen and often dangerous way by the other Britons scattered through the districts already con-

"Miror quod me tantillum homunculum de famoso et florigero Francorum rure vestræ fraternitatis industria interpellat Saxonicæ prolis prosapia genitum." — P. 331, ed. Giles.

[196] "Arcivillum regis Scotiæ filium. . . . Ut perfecti ingenii lima eraderetur scabredo Scotica." — Guill. Malmesb., p. 4.

[197] "Ex Hiberniæ brumosis insulæ climatibus. . . . Tam creber meatus est (istinc illinc que, istuc illucque) navigero æquoreas fretantium calle gurgites. . . . Cur Hibernia quo catervatim istinc lectores classibus advecti confluunt . . . ac si istic, fœcunde Britanniæ in cespite, didascali Argivi Romanive quirites minime reperiri queant. . . . Etiamsi Theodorus, Hibernensium globo discipulorum (seu aper truculentus Molossorum catasta ringente vallatus), stipetur; limato perniciter grammatico dente rebelles phalanges discutit," etc. — Pp. 92-94, ed. Giles; Cf. Ozanam, *op. cit.*, 492. This letter must have been written before 690, the date of Theodore's death.

quered by the Saxons. After one of these wars or insurrections, more cruel than usual, the national assembly of the West Saxons deliberated long over the measures it would be best to take by way of getting rid of one of the principal obstacles to the fusion of the two races, by leading back the vanquished Britons to unity in respect to paschal observances. The discussion lasted several days. At last, starting from the principle that no force must be employed, but solely reason and persuasion, it was resolved that Abbot Aldhelm, who was as blameless in life as in doctrine, should be charged to teach them the true laws of the Church, and to end the schism, for the honor of his country, as well as for the common salvation.[198] A national council (probably that of Becancelde), at which almost all the Anglo-Saxon clergy were represented, confirmed the mission which the Abbot of Malmesbury had received from his countrymen. He accepted the task with his usual charity. Without adventuring his person in the midst of these refractory tribes, he addressed himself to their chiefs and clergy in writing. An unexpected success attended his efforts. Of all that he wrote on this subject there remains to us only one letter, addressed to a petty British king who still maintained his independence in Cornwall, at the extreme point of southern England. He draws in it a striking picture of the religious separation, of the moral repulsion, which still at the end of the seventh century rose like a wall between the two races — between the victors and the vanquished. "Beyond the mouth of the Severn," he says, "the priests of Cambria, proud of the purity of their morals, have such a horror of communication with us that they refuse to pray with us in the churches, or to seat themselves at the same table; more than this, what is left from our meals is thrown to dogs and swine, the dishes and bottles we have used have to be rubbed with sand, or purified by fire, before they will condescend to touch them. The Britons give us neither the salutation nor the kiss of peace; and if one of us went to live in their country, the

About 690.

Letter of Abbot Aldhelm to the British king of Cornwall. 692 or 693.

[198] "Tunc rebellionem meditantes Kentuinus rex tam anxia cæde perdomuit, ut nihil ulterius sperarent. . . . Hinc frequenter West-Saxonum conventus, crebri cœtus coacti . . . sententia per plures dies multo verborum agmine volutata, nunc finem habuit: non vi cogendos schismaticos sed rationibus ducendos. . . . Ambitur precibus B. vir, ut hunc laborem impendat . . . patriæ laudi et cunctorum in commune saluti." — Guill. Malmesb., p. 14. Cf. Bolland, *l. c.*, p. 87.

natives would hold no communication with him till after he had been made to endure a penance of forty days."

Aldhelm then enlarges upon the cruel scandal of such struggles and hatreds in the Church of Christ. He discusses in succession the question of the tonsure and that of paschal observance. "We entreat you on our knees," he says, "in view of our future and common country in heaven, and of the angels, our future fellow-countrymen — we adjure you not to persevere in your arrogant contempt of the decrees of St. Peter, and the traditions of the Roman Church, by a proud and tyrannical attachment to the statutes of your ancestors. . . . Whatever may be the perfection of good works, they are unprofitable out of the Catholic Church, alike to cenobites, however faithfully they may follow their rule, and to anchorites hidden in the wildest solitudes. To sum up everything in one word, it is vain for any man to take credit to himself for belonging to the Catholic faith so long as he rejects the doctrine and rule of St. Peter. For the foundation of the Church and the consolidation of the faith, placed first in Christ and secondly in St. Peter, wavers not before the assaults of any tempest. It is on Peter that the Truth himself conferred the privilege of the Church, saying, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church.'" [199]

It is generally admitted that the zeal and eloquence of Aldhelm led back to orthodox rule a great many Britons, especially those who lived under the daily extending sway of the kings of Wessex.[200] But even the narratives most

[199] "Geruntio regi, simulque cunctis Dei sacerdotibus per Domnonia conversantibus. . . . Nuper cum enim in concilio episcoporum ex tota pene Britannia innumerabilis Dei sacerdotum caterva confluxit. . . . Demetarum sacerdotes de privata propriæ conversationis munditia gloriantes nostram communionem magnopere abominantur . . . reliquias epularum lurconum canum rictibus et immundis devorandos porcis projiciunt. Vascula quoque et phialas. . . . Propter communem cœlestis patriæ sortem et angelicæ sodalitatis collegium . . . flexis poplitibus . . . suppliciter efflagitamus ut . . . traditionem Ecclesiæ Romanæ propter prisca priorum statuta vestrorum nequaquam tyrannica freti pertinacia arroganter aspernemini. . . . Petro autem veritas ita privilegium sanxit Ecclesiæ." — Pp. 83–89, ed. Giles. Two words little used in the seventh century — *barones* and *katharos* — the first applied to military chiefs, the second to heretics who thought themselves purer than their neighbors — will be remarked in this curious letter.

[200] "Scripsit, jubente synodo suæ gentis, librum egregium adversus errorem Britonum . . . multosque eorum qui occidentalibus Saxonibus subditi erant Britones, ad catholicam Dominici Paschæ celebrationem hujus lectione perduxit." — Bede, v. 18. It is difficult to believe with Mabillon that this *librum egregium* was nothing else than the letter to the King of Cornwall which has just been quoted. The monastic historians of Malmesbury attrib-

favorable to him make it apparent that all did not yield. The greater part of those who retained their independence beyond the Severn remained, according to all appearance, inaccessible to his efforts.

The Britons of Cambria, who had resisted the efforts of Saxon missionaries, adopt the orthodox Easter in obedience to the voice of one of their own bishops. 770.

When at length they yielded, it was not to the preaching or influence of a stranger. The victory which neither the learned Saxon abbot nor the great Roman missionary could win, was the work of a native prelate. Elbod, Bishop of Bangor, a Briton by birth, succeeded, not without much resistance, in introducing the Roman computation, first in North Cambria, and afterward in the southern part of the province, towards the end of the eighth century.[201] From that date there is no longer any question of dissent between the two Churches. In everything belonging to worship and faith, the Cambrian Britons, while still defending their independence with jealous pride, were henceforward at one with the Anglo-Saxons.[202] Like them, they went in crowds to Rome, their kings at their head,[203] swelling the armies of pilgrims who mingled at the foot of the chair of Peter their aspirations, their enmities, their diversities of race, but who returned with the lawful assurance that the supreme advantage of catholic unity exacted no sacrifice of truly national independence, right, or tradition.

Thus the different centres of that Celtic dissidence which has been so unjustly called schism, were successively overcome; and thus finished, upon the ground of religion, though

ute greater results to Aldhelm's work than does Bede. "Ad Dominicæ fidei regulam, et ipsos præsules et innumeram populi revocavit multitudinem." — Bolland., *l. c.*, p. 85. "Debent usque hodie correctionem suam Aldhelmo; quamvis pro insita nequitia et virum non agnoscant et volumen pessumdederint." — Guill. Malmesb., ap. Wharton, p. 15.

[201] "Anno DCCLXX. Pascha mutatur apud Britones, emendante Elbod, homine Dei." — *Ann. Eccl. Menevensis*, in *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii. p. 648. Cf. Augustin Thierry, *Histoire de la Conquête d'Angleterre*, t. i. p. 87.

[202] This has been perfectly demonstrated by F. Walter (*Das alte Wales*, p. 232), against the childishly absurd affirmations of Roberts, Gieseler, and even of Lappenberg. All that can be admitted is, that the Cambrian bishops, who had their own metropolitan see either at *Menevia* (St. David's) or at Llandaff, did not recognize the metropolitan rights conferred by St. Gregory upon Augustin. The question was definitely settled only by Innocent III., who placed the Cambrian bishops under the authority of Canterbury.

[203] Cadwallader is noted as one of the Welsh kings who met the Anglo-Saxon kings at Rome in the year 680, but the assertion rests upon a doubtful tradition, while the pilgrimages of Howell and Cyngus in the ninth century, like that of Howell the Good in the tenth, rest upon more satisfactory authority.

only to begin over again and perpetuate itself elsewhere, the long struggle between the Celts and the Saxons. According to the common fate of human conflicts and passions, all this tumult died away into silence and forgetfulness, as the Rhine disappears obscurely in the sand and marshes of Holland after its majestic and sometimes stormy waters have swept through so many famous lands proud of, and blessed by, its presence.

In casting a last glance upon these prolonged contests, so insignificant at bottom, yet so seriously affecting national influences and interests, and animated by the passions, talents, and virtues of their principal champions, —the wisdom, I may even add, the grave beauty, of the language used by him who was the greatest monk of the greatest age, will be profoundly admired.

"This dispute regarding the date of a day," says our Mabillon, "occupied the Church for six centuries, and it required three of these centuries to restore union. Human nature takes back in this kind of controversy its downward inclination. The heat of warfare and the passion of success take possession of the soul under the cover of religion; and as they know no limits, it often happens that the laws of Christian charity are sacrificed to questions of purely human invention. In such cases, no one is permitted to disobey the judgment of the Church; but it is important that the pastors of the Church should use their authority with so much moderation as not imprudently to provoke feeble spirits too much attached to their own opinions into revolt, thus producing the greatest evils from an insignificant cause." [294]

At the same time, this generous son of St. Benedict congratulates himself with reason that the Benedictines had the honor of leading back to unity the Scots and Britons so long separated for so small a matter from the Roman Church.

It must be recollected at the same time that, during all the seventh century, the Celtic or British Church was much more extensive than the British nation. The nation was concentrated in Cambria and in the neighboring peninsulas;

[294] "Sic unius diei quæstio Ecclesiam detinuit per annos fere sexcentos: et tria minimum sæcula vix fuerunt satis componendæ hominum rixosorum coronæ. . . . In his vero casibus, sicut ab Ecclesiæ catholicæ sententia recedere nemini licet; ita convenit Ecclesiæ pastores sic moderari auctoritatem suam, ut nec imbecilles animos, propriis sensibus nimirum addictos, incaute provocent ad secessionem, nec in levibus causis pariant grande malum." — Mabillon, *Præfatio in III. Secul. Benedict.*, No. 14, 15.

the Church embraced, besides the western coast of England, all Ireland and Scotland, without mentioning the Irish colonies in Gaul and Belgium. Let us repeat that the opposition which rose in that Church against conformity to Roman rights and usages was exactly proportioned to the degree of patriotic resistance excited by the invasion of the Saxons, behind whom appeared the Roman missionaries. This resistance was desperate among the British Christians, who retained the memory or daily felt the weight of the terrible excesses of the conquest. It was less violent and less prolonged in Caledonia, and came to a conclusion there as soon as the struggle ceased between the Celts and the Saxons. And it was almost non-existent in Ireland, where, except in the incursion of Egfrid, which was universally blamed by the Northumbrian saints, the Saxons never penetrated by the strong hand, and where the two races lived peaceably together. Nothing could give more satisfactory proof how little the fundamental truths of Christianity and the infallible authority of the Church had to do with the matter, and how much in it was national rather than religious.[205]

Celtic monachism is vanquished in the British Isles as in Gaul by the rule of St. Benedict.

In all that concerns the special subject of these volumes, it will be remarked that the result of the struggle between the two great elements which disputed the empire of the monastic world was the same in the British Islands as in Gaul. This struggle was much longer and more serious in Great Britain, because it was complicated by national dislike, legitimate resistance, and an unappeasable resentment, which had no place in the influence exercised in France by Columbanus of Luxeuil and his Irish monks. The rule and order of St. Benedict were naturally associated, in the eyes of the vanquished and dispossessed Celts, with the ferocious foreigners who pursued them even to the mountain-glens and islands, in which they found a last asylum. Besides, the Columba of Iona, the great partriarch of the Celtic monks of Great Britain, was, it appears to us, a much more attractive personage than his illustrious namesake of Luxeuil; his sons, his heirs, Aïdan, Adamnan, and so many others, had a greater fascination, a much greater influence upon the masses and upon events than the successors of Columbanus among the Gallo-Franks. At the same time the sons of St. Benedict, the victors of the struggle, from St. Augustin to

[205] Varin, 2e *Mémoire*.

Bede, were much more remarkable men than the greater part of the Gallo-Frankish Benedictines of their day. St. Eloysius and St. Leger, whose history we shall soon relate, was scarcely equal to Wilfrid, Cuthbert, Benedict Biscop, and the Venerable Bede. The latter, besides, are more entirely monks, more completely identified with the Benedictine institution. It is, however, evident on both sides of the Channel that the Celtic element fell, died away, and disappeared before the Roman element as personified in the order of St. Benedict. The Benedictine influence everywhere carried the day, and prepared for the Church those valiant legions which, after having edified and disciplined France, and conquered and civilized England, marched on to new victories, and extended beyond the Rhine and the Elbe the frontiers of Christendom.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VENERABLE BEDE.

The entire history of this period is summed up in the Venerable Bede. — His works. — Encyclopædical character of his genius. — His theological and scientific writings; his love for the classics. — His *History of the English.* — His scrupulous care to prove its truth. — His soul. — The love of virtue and truth evident in all his writings. — He is himself the type of the noble lives he records. — His life passed entirely in the cloister of Yarrow. — He is spared in his youth by the pestilence which carries off the whole community except himself and his abbot. — His different masters; his diligence in work. — His extensive connections. — His friendship with Abbot Acca. — His works on Holy Scripture. — His celebrated letter to Bishop Egbert of York upon the abuses of ecclesiastical government and monastic life. — His bold freedom does not diminish his authority. — He is accused of heresy in popular drinking-songs. — His intimacy with the monks of Lindisfarne. — Narrative of his death by an eye-witness. — His worship and his relics. — Contrast between the country he lived in and the actual condition of Northumberland.

"O venerable Bede!
The saint, the scholar, from a circle freed
Of toil stupendous, in a hallowed seat
Of learning, where thou heardst the billows beat
On a wild coast, rough monitors to feed
Perpetual industry. Sublime Recluse!
The recreant soul, that dares to shun the debt
Imposed on human kind, must first forget
Thy diligence, thy unrelaxing use
Of a long life; and in the hour of death
The last dear service of thy passing breath."

— WORDSWORTH.

THE period of history which we have just recorded is crowned by one of those great figures which stand out above the sea of ages, and triumph over the forgetfulness as well as over the systematic contempt of frivolous generations. The name of Bede, after having been one of the greatest and most popular in Christendom, still remains invested with an unchangeable fame. He is the type of that studious and learned life which, in the eyes of many, sums up the entire mission of the monk. He was the most cultivated man, the greatest intellectual personage of his country and age; but he holds a still greater position in the eyes of those to whom he has been a guide and master throughout a laborious and bewildering task. By the student who has passed several years almost entirely in his company, he is venerated as a saint and loved as a friend, and, without absolving him of his patriotic prejudices and partialities, the spirit does reverence to his character still more than to his glory.

Let us then examine his works, his spirit, and his life.

His works.

We turn to his works in the first place, which have made him the wonder and honor of his age, as well as a father and doctor of the Church. This Anglo-Saxon, born at the end of the Christian world, and of a race which half a century before his birth was still plunged in the darkness of idolatry, at once reveals himself clothed in the fulness of all enlightenment known to his time. Thanks to the unwearying activity of his mind, and the universal extension of his researches, his fame became European, and lasted through all the middle ages. It was not only the great historian whom, during his lifetime, and for long centuries after his death, men admired, as we ourselves admire him — it was, in addition to this, the master whose vast erudition embraced all that was then studied and known in the world. The universal character of his genius is that which most astonished his contemporaries, and has even excited surprise among our own.

The universal character of his genius.

He was for England what Cassiodorus was for Italy and St. Isidore for Spain. But he had, in addition, an influence and echo beyond his own country which has been surpassed by none: his influence upon Christendom was as rapid as it was extensive, and his works, which soon found a place in all the monastic libraries of the West, brought down his fame to the period of the Renaissance. He wrote at his pleasure in prose or verse, in Anglo-Saxon and in Latin; and many of his writings prove

His theological writings,

that he was acquainted with Greek.[206] The greater part of his works were devoted to theology and its cognate studies. In the list which he himself made out, three years before his death, of the forty-five works which he had written up to that time, he enumerates, in the first place, his commentaries and homilies upon Holy Scripture, specially drawn from the Fathers, so as to form a summary, for the use of his countrymen and of all Christians, of the traditional doctrines of the Church. These Biblical studies occupied him much during his whole life, and he professed a marked preference for that source of human knowledge which, to his eyes, surpassed all others, as much in its antiquity as by its divine origin and moral usefulness.[207] He plunged into this study with an ardor so intelligent and persevering, that it won him, in the eyes of the most illustrious of his countrymen, St. Boniface, the reputation of being one of the most sagacious investigators of the Holy Scriptures.[208] In his Martyrology, his historical summaries, and his biographies of the saints, he added a demonstration of the government of God by facts and the lives of men, to the theoretic exposition of the teachings of the faith.

And scientific.

But, far from confining himself to theology, he wrote with success upon astronomy and meteorology, physics and music, philosophy and geography, arithmetic and rhetoric, grammar and versification, without omitting medicine, and without disdaining to descend even to orthography and numeration. His treatises have almost always the form of abridgments or catechisms adapted to the education of his monastic disciples. He thus penetrated, with a bold and unwearying step, into all the paths then open to the human intelligence, with a clearness and extent of vision truly surprising for the age and circumstances under which he lived. He thus won the name of Father of English learning,

[206] The translation which he had made of the Gospel of St. John from Greek into Latin is unhappily lost. — Giles, *Life of Bede*, p. 51. M. Ozanam, in his *Etudes Germaniques*, quotes a paper from M. Renan, crowned by the Academy, but not published, which proves that the study of Greek was maintained among the Anglo-Saxon monks long after its introduction by the Archbishop St. Theodore.

[207] "Sancta Scriptura cæteris omnibus scripturis, non solum auctoritate, quia divina; vel utilitate, quia ad vitam ducit æternam; sed et antiquitate et ipsa præeminet." — *De Schematibus Scripturæ*, ap. *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. iii. p 506.

[208] "Sagacissimi investigatoris Scripturarum monachi Bedæ." — S. Bonifacii *Epist. ad Huetbertum Abbatem.*

given to him by the greatest of modern Englishmen.[209] His scientific essays, *De Rurum Natura*, and *De Temporum Ratione*, contain a first essay towards a universal chronology, and afterwards sum up with method and precision the physical and astronomical sciences, which had, among our ancestors, survived the decay of the Roman empire. Good judges have even acknowledged that he had gathered more actual truths and fewer errors than are to be found in any Roman books upon similar subjects.[210] In this region, as elsewhere, our worthy Anglo-Saxon appeals with respectful confidence to the authority of Aristotle, Hippocrates, and Pliny. Like all the scholars and writers of Christian ages, he shows a certain satisfaction in exhibiting his familiarity with classic authors. He has left to us, or at least there have been attributed to him, collections of sentences drawn from Plato, Seneca, and, above all, Cicero, of whom he was an enthusiastic admirer. He often quotes Ovid and Lucan, Statius, Lucretius, and still oftener Virgil, whom he quotes even in the tales of the miracles of his Northumbrian saints.[211] He has also attempted to imitate him in a pretty eclogue on the return of spring.[212] He thus presents, in the eighth century, the type of that character of *scholar* — that is to say, of a man profoundly imbued with classic literature — which the English of the present day still prize so highly, and which the princes of public eloquence,[213] not less than the chiefs of the episcopate, esteem one of their highest distinctions. It does not seem, however, that his familiarity with these illustrious heathen weakened him either in Christian feeling or in the monastic spirit; and

His love for the classics.

[209] "Father of English learning" — this is the name given him by Burke, *Essay on English History*, p. 229.

[210] Sharon Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. iii. p. 403. According to this author, Bede's work is sufficient of itself to prove that the irruption of the Teutonic nations into the Roman empire was in no way the substitution of barbarism for knowledge.

[211] Thus in relating the case of a demoniac at the tomb of the saint and King Oswald at Bardeney, he uses the well-known line —

"Conticuere omnes, intentique ora tenebant."

The illustrious Newman has fully established the absurdity of the supposition made by Milman, the learned Anglican Dean of St. Paul's, that Bede and other monastic doctors knew classical antiquity only at second-hand by extracts or isolated fragments. This idea is contradicted by all the monuments of the time, as well as by the very nature of the monastic spirit and studies. — *Atlantis*, 1859, n. 3, p. 31.

[212] "*Cuculus*, sive Veris et Hiemis conflictus," vol. i. p. 35, ed. Giles. Compare p. clxix.

[213] Mr. Gladstone, commentator, and Lord Derby, translator, of Homer

nothing in his life contradicts the touching prayer with which he ends the list of his literary labors: "Oh, good Jesus, who hast deigned to refresh my soul with the sweet streams of knowledge, grant to me that I may one day mount to Thee, who art the source of all wisdom, and remain forever in Thy divine presence." [214]

History of the English.

This constant thought of God, of the soul, and of eternal salvation which is evident in all the works of his laborious life, and manly intelligence, shows itself at the beginning of the great work which still wins for him the attention and gratitude of all friends of the truth. "I entreat," he says in his Preface, "all those of our nation who read this History, or hear it read, to recommend often to the divine clemency the infirmities of my body and of my soul. Let each man in his province, seeing the care which I have taken to note down everything that is memorable or agreeable for the inhabitants of each district, pay me back by praying for me." "Dear and good father," he also writes when sending the first copy of his History to the friend who had suggested it to him, "beloved friend in Christ, remember, I beseech you, my weakness, you and all the servants of Christ who live with you; remember to intercede for me with the merciful Judge, and make all those who read my humble work do the same." [215]

This humble work — this *pamphlet*, as it is called by the great and modest writer — was nothing less than that *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, which has made Bede not only the father of English history, but the true founder of history in the middle ages. The most competent authorities have recognized in him a chronicler well-informed and systematic, an able and penetrating critic, on whom the rigorous precision of his language, and the scrupulous accuracy of his narrative, bestow the full right of being heard and

[214] "Teque deprecor, bone Jesu, ut cui propitius donasti verba tuæ scientiæ dulciter haurire, dones etiam benignus, aliquando ad te fontem omnis sapientiæ pervenire et apparere semper ante faciem tuam."

[215] "Omnes . . . nostræ nationis legentes sive audientes, suppliciter precor ut pro meis infirmitatibus et mentis et corporis . . . sæpius intervenire memineriut: et in suis quique provinciis hanc mihi remunerationis vicem rependant, ut qui de singulis provinciis . . . quæ memoratu digna atque incolis grata credideram diligenter adnotare curavi." — *Hist. Eccles., Præfatio gloriosissimo Regi Ceoluulfo.* "Semper amantissime in Christo pater optime, . . . te supplex obsecro ut pro mea fragilitate cum his qui tecum sunt, apud pium judicem sedulus intercedere memineris: sed et eos quos eadem nostra opuscula pervenire feceris, hoc idem facere monueris." — *Epist. ad Albinum Abbat.*, Op. Minora, p. 229.

having his testimony weighed, even upon facts which could not come under his personal observation.[216] Besides, all his narrative which is not founded upon what he himself saw or heard, is given on the authority of contemporaries always conscientiously quoted and carefully designated or described by him. "I have consulted individually," he says, "in all that refers to Northumbria, innumerable writers in addition to all that I could answer for myself. . . . But I pray my reader humbly, if he finds that I have written anything which is not the truth, not to blame me severely for it, since, according to the true law of history, I have sincerely labored to put into writing for the instruction of posterity all that I could gather from common report."[217] The rare prudence with which he records those miracles which occupy so exaggerated a place in the annals, or, more strictly, in the habits and necessities of his time, is especially remarkable. He gives none upon his own personal authority, but always names the persons from whom they come, stating whether he has received them at first or second hand.[218]

Thus the most sceptical reader is unable to turn over the pages of Bede without being convinced at once of his sincerity and of his historical discrimination; while the Christian, eager to know and admire the works of God still more in the history of spiritual life than in the history of nations, can never feel sufficient gratitude to the unwearied worker who has endowed us with a book unrivalled among the historical works of Christianity, and who has given to England and its specially historic race the finest monument of national history which any modern people has yet received from its fathers.[219]

[216] Lappenberg, Ozanam, Varin.

[217] "Si qua in his quæ scripsimus aliter quam se veritas habet posita repererit, non hoc nobis imputet qui, quod vera lex historiæ est, simpliciter ea quæ fama vulgante collegimus ad instructionem posteritatis litteris mandare studuimus." — *Præfatio.*

[218] Not a single miracle is to be found in the biography of the five first abbots of his own monastery, all of whom he had personally known: while they abound in his narrative of the life of St. Cuthbert, which he had from the monks of Lindisfarne. This is remarked by the wise and pious Lingard. — *Anglo-Saxon Church*, ii. 102, 103.

[219] All who have had to make researches into medieval historians, and to whom it is of consequence to save their time and eyesight, know the inestimable value of a good, portable, and easily-read edition. Such persons will thank us for pointing out to them, among the numerous editions of the Venerable Bede, that published at Oxford in 1846, by Robert Hussey, bachelor in theology and professor of history. It contains in one volume all the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, with the lives of the Abbots of Wear-

His spiritual life.

This historian of souls begins by making us acquainted with his own; for who does not recognize, by the fashion in which a man tells the tale of the trials of virtue and truth here below, what he himself would have been capable of doing or suffering for them? The soul which thus betrays itself in his narrative is holy and full of grace. Not only in his beautiful narrations of ceaseless self-devotion, and of all the wonders of which man regenerated by faith is capable, but in the person of Bede himself, we find a complete type of that humility, serenity, and generous fervor which have won him throughout all Christendom the surname of Venerable. The Christian virtues were united naturally in him to that thirst for knowledge, that love of study, that vivifying thirst for work, that noble thoughtfulness of things divine and human, which make our monk-historian so interesting a personage in the history of the human mind. An esteemed writer[220] reproaches him with having been more Roman than English. I consider this reproach quite unfounded; no trace is to be found of the least sacrifice of his patriotism to his orthodoxy. He certainly preferred the Roman to the Celtic spirit; but it was his Anglo-Saxon patriotism, and not his Roman predilections, which dictated to him certain judgments inspired by national prejudice against the vanquished Britons in spiritual as well as temporal affairs. He had, like all other men, his preferences, his weaknesses, his blindness — but never has he willingly disguised, mutilated, or betrayed the truth; on the contrary, he served and loved with his best powers not only truth but justice, and, as it has been well said by an upright historian[221] of our own day, impartiality consists in being just, not in being neuter.

His life.

His life may be regarded as a faithful mirror of the laborious and holy existence of those vast clois-

mouth and Yarrow, and Bede's letter to Archbishop Egbert. It also contains all the divers readings and notes of the great edition of Smith (1722), rectified and completed with exemplary clearness and sobriety by the editor. If he had added to his volume Bede's life of St. Cuthbert, the letter of the other Cuthbert upon the death of the historian, and a map, this excellent publication would have left nothing to be desired. Justice obliges us to name here by the side of Bede a writer of our own day, M. W. B. Maccabe, who, in his *Catholic History of England* (London, 1847–49, 2 vols.), has devoted himself to a faithful reproduction of the narratives of Bede and other ancient historians, and, by giving a faithful and minute picture of the three first centuries of English history, deserves the gratitude of those who love to know the truth without being able to seek it at the fountain-head.

[220] Lappenberg.

[221] Franz de Champagny, *Correspondant*, vol. xii. p. 785.

ters which continued to rise in England under the rule of St. Benedict, and which were not less numerous in the eighth than in the seventh century. It was entirely passed in the monastery which had sheltered his childhood. He was born in 673,[222] in one of the seventy detached manors of public property (Folc-lands), which King Egfrid bestowed on Abbot Benedict Biscop on his fourth return from Rome. The little Bede, whose name in Anglo-Saxon means *prayer*, was intrusted by his relatives at the age of seven to Benedict, 680.
who had just completed his monastery of Wear-mouth. But the holy and learned abbot soon transferred the charge and education of his young pupil to his coadjutor Ceolfrid, when, with his twenty monks, old and 682.
young, the latter removed a short distance off, to found, at the mouth of the Tyne, the colony of Yarrow. They were no sooner installed in their new home than a cruel epidemic seized the colony. It carried off all the 686.
monks who could sing in the choir, except the abbot alone and the young Bede, still a child, who was his favorite pupil. These two continued to celebrate, as they best could, among their tears and regrets, the entire canonical service, with obstinate precision, until new brethren joined them.[223] There are few who will not be touched by the thought of these two representatives of Northumbrian Christianity and Anglo-Saxon monachism, the one already mature and illustrious, the other an obscure child predestined to fame, singing all alone the praises of God in their cloister depopulated by death, and awaiting the future with resigned yet unconquerable faith!

At the death of Benedict Biscop, when Ceolfrid was called to the head of the reunited monasteries, which now formed but one community,[224] the young Bede remained at Yarrow, which he never left. There he received deacon's orders at nineteen, and at the age of thirty the priesthood from the hands of St. John, called of Beverley, who then occupied

[222] According to Mabillon and Lingard; not in 674, as say Pagi and Stephenson.

[223] "Abbas . . . multum tristris, præcepit ut, intermisso ritu priori, psalmodiam totam, præter Vesperam et Matutinas, sine antiphonis transigerent: quod cum unius hebdomadis spatio inter multas ejus lacrymas et querimonias esse actitatum, diutius hoc fieri non ferens rursus statuit: ut antiphonatæ psalmodiæ juxta morem instauraretur, cunctisque adnitentibus, per se et quem prædixi puerum, quæ statuerat, non parvo cum labore complebat." — BEDE, t. vi., App., p. 421. See note 98 in page 503.

[224] See pp. 501 and 505.

the see of Wilfrid at Hexham. And there he passed all the rest of his life, which was dedicated to study and meditation on Holy Scripture, without other amusement than the daily songs of the choir — without other pleasure, as he has himself said, than to learn, to teach, and to write.[225]

At the same time, when Bede tells us that he passed all his life in the same monastery, it must not be supposed that he denied himself the expeditions which occupied so considerable a part in the lives of the principal monks. Notwithstanding the great authority which attached to Benedict Biscop's double foundation, and the number of monks who hastened to it, it is difficult to imagine how the young monk could follow, without leaving his monastery, the lessons of all those whom at various periods he calls his masters. For whether at Yarrow or elsewhere, he received an education both valuable and varied. Among those who introduced him into the study of the Bible, he indicates a monk trained by Ceadda, the humble and earnest rival of Wilfrid, and, in consequence, imbued with all that was purest and most irreproachable in Celtic tradition;[226] while Greek was taught by monks of the school founded by Theodore in his metropolis of Canterbury,[227] and ecclesiastical music by the precentor of St. Peter's in the Vatican, whom Pope Vitalianus sent to England with Benedict Biscop.[228]

His different masters.

From pupil he soon became master, and that of the highest rank. It is evident from various passages of his works that his days and nights, of which a very moderate part was given to sleep, were divided between the studies and researches which he pursued to his last hour, the instructions which he gave to the six hundred monks of his double community, without reckoning the foreign monks whom he admitted to his lessons, and the composition of the books which have immortalized him. An existence more completely occupied it would be difficult to imagine. Except

His industry.

[225] "Cum essem annorum septem, cura propinquorum datus sum educandus . . . cunctumque ex eo tempus vitæ in ejusdem monasterii habitatione peragens, omnem meditandis Scripturis operam dedi; atque inter observantiam disciplinæ regularis et quotidianam cantandi in ecclesia curam, semper aut discere, aut docere, aut scribere dulce habui." — Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 24.

[226] "Frater quidam de eis qui me in Scripturis erudiebant et erat in monasterio ac magisterio illius (Ceaddæ) educatus, vocabulo Trumberct." — *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 3.

[227] See p. 354.

[228] See p. 499.

during the course of his last illness, he had no assistant in his work. "I am my own secretary," he said; "I dictate, I compose, I copy all myself." Though he was not unconscious of the obstacles which the yoke — or, as he himself says, the servitude of the rule — threw in the way of his work, he never withdrew himself from it;[229] and long after his death his scrupulous exactness in fulfilling all its obligations, especially that of singing the common service, was told in his praise.[230]

His extended connection.

The laborious severity of this life in the cloister did not, however, put any obstacle in the way of his extensive and important intercourse with the world outside. His friendships were almost all produced or occasioned by the composition of his great historical work. He was urged to undertake it by Albinus, whom we have already remarked as the principal disciple of the Archbishop Theodore and the African Abbot Adrian, the first Anglo-Saxon ever called to govern the great monastery of St. Augustin at Canterbury. Albinus furnished him with memoranda of all that had happened in Kent and the neighboring counties in the time of the missionaries sent by St. Gregory;[231] he even sent a priest of the adjoining diocese of London to Rome, to search in the archives of the Roman Church, with the permission of the reigning pope, Gregory II., for the letters of his predecessors and other documents relative to the mission to England.[232] All the bishops of England also assisted in the work by transmitting to the author what information they could collect concerning the origin of the faith in their dioceses, and the principal acts of the holy personages who had lived in them. The abbots and monks of the most important monasteries also furnished their contingent. The details given on this subject by Bede himself show that a constant communication was kept up between the principal centres of religious life, and that an amount of intellectual activity as surprising as admirable, when the difficulty of communication and the internal wars which ravaged England are taken into consideration, existed among their inhabitants.

[229] "Injuncti me operis labori supposui: in quo ut innumera monasticæ servitutis retinacula præteream ipse mihi dictator, simul notarius et librarius existerem." — *Epistola ad Accam*, Opera, i. 179.

[230] Alcuini *Opera*, i. p. 282.

[231] Bede describes him as "vir per omnia doctissimus."

[232] "Perscrutato sanctæ Ecclesiæ Romanæ scrinio." — *Prolog.*

In addition to his great historical work, his correspondence gives evidence of the number of visits he must have paid and received on the subjects of his studies and writings. There is no proof that he was ever at Rome, to which in his day so many Anglo-Saxon monks and princes crowded, though this was long believed.[233] But it is known that he was on terms of friendship with the King of the Northumbrians, to whom he dedicated his History of England, and with the King of Kent, to whom he addressed a letter upon the celebration of Easter. Among the bishops of his time his most intimate friend was Acca, the companion and successor of Wilfrid at Hexham. This learned and magnificent prelate took the warmest interest in literature and the arts. After having ornamented with many great works the abbey church built by his master at Hexham, he added a very large and noble library, according to Bede, of which the latter made great use. They were in intimate and constant communication. Bede dedicated several of his works in prose and verse to the successor of Wilfrid; and Acca, who loved, like Bede, to quote from the classics, and who, like Gregory the Great, had a fancy for playing upon words, insisted that his laborious friend, who had given him a commentary upon the Gospel by St. Mark, should add to it a commentary on Luke.[234] The correspondence between these two Anglo-Saxon monks, while doing no discredit to their ability, is specially honorable to their hearts, and shows to what a height prayer and study had developed in the Northumbrian cloisters the affectionate sentiments and tender feelings of friendship. In this correspondence Bede lavishes assurances of his regard on him, whom he calls the most loved and longed-for of all bishops.[235] He shows himself to be, as he says, ruled and inspired by that trust and mutual tenderness which believes and hopes everything from the heart it loves.[236] At the same time those pure and noble motives

[233] From a letter written by Pope Sergius, given by William of Malmesbury, but which does not refer to our Bede, according to Mabillon. — *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. iii. p. 509; and LINGARD, *Antiquities*, vol. ii. pp. 410, 415.

[234] "Beatum Lucam luculento sermone expone." — T. i. p. cliii., ed. Giles. See other editions, *ap.* RAINE, *The Priory of Hexham*, pp. 32, 33, 34.

[235] "*Dilectissime* ac desideratissime omnium qui in terris morantur *antistitum*." And elsewhere: "Bene vale semper, amantissime antistes, nostri memor in Domino. . . . Domino beatissimo et omnium desideratissimo Accæ episcopo Beda humilis presbyter."

[236] "Non hæc certa alia quam indubitata mutui fiducia facit amoris, quæ de amico pectore omnia duntaxat quæ fieri possunt, credit, omnia sperat." — P. 179, ed. Giles.

which guided him in his studies and commentaries on Holy Scripture, which held the greatest place in his life, and have so much contributed to the increase of his influence on Christendom, are fully apparent in his letters. Both here and elsewhere the reader perceives by what a pious and patriotic anxiety he was moved to combat the ignorance and lukewarmness of the new Catholics of England, by making them capable of reading and understanding the Bible.[237] To bring to the level of all capacities the most approved explanations of obscure passages; to seek out with scrupulous care the mystic sense and spiritual use of Biblical narratives; at once to go deeply into and to simplify that study of the sacred words which is so dear and so necessary to real piety; to draw from it the lessons and especially the consolations pointed out by the apostle St. Paul,[238] and of which we have so much need in the sharp anguish of this sombre life, and during the prolonged delays of divine justice; to give thus an answer to the anxiety which filled the minds of the great monks who were the apostles of England, and of other ancient nations; such was the task of our Bede. He gave himself up to it with a fervor which never relaxed; with a perseverance which consumed his nights and days; with touching and sincere modesty; with delicate precautions against the danger of being taken for a plagiarist;[239] with a courage which sometimes failed him under the greatness of the task, and the multitude of obstacles in his way, but only to spring up again more unconquerable than ever; and, in short, with a solidity and assurance of doctrine which have kept for him, till the present time, a place among the best authorized interpreters of the Catholic faith.[240]

His celebrated letter to

Another bishop with whom Bede had much intercourse was Egbert, Bishop of York, a brother of

[237] "Nostræ, id est Anglorum gentis, inertiæ consulendum ratus." — *Epist. ad Eusebium*, p. 193, ed. Giles.

[238] See especially *Epistola ad Accam de Templo Salomonis*, p. 171, ed. Giles.

[239] "Sollicitus per omnia ne majorum dicta furari, et hæc quasi mea propria componere. . . . Qui in legis divinæ meditatione etsi non (ut ipse scripsisti) dies noctesque pervigiles ducere sufficio . . . operis immensitate perterritus et obstrepentium causarum (quas tu melius nosti) necessitate præpeditus. . . . Opusculum velocissime quantum tempus dederat, ne tua sacrosancta voluntas impediretur, emendatum membranulis indideram." — *Epist. ad Accam*, pp. 180, 184.

[240] An idea of his spirit and style may be attained by reading in the Roman Breviary the service for All Saints' Day and the two days following, in which several of the lessons are taken from his *De Sanctis*.

Bishop Egbert of York,

the King of Northumbria, and a disciple of Bede himself. Sometimes the prince-bishop would visit his former master at Yarrow; sometimes Bede, in return, went to the episcopal monastery of York, where he occupied himself in superintending the school established by Egbert, or sought out recollections of Paulinus and of Wilfrid, and all the details of that religious history of Northumbria which without him would have fallen into forgetfulness forever. The two friends studied together during these visits. A year before his death, not being able to accept an invitation from Egbert, Bede addressed to him a letter, which has been preserved, and which is a sort of treatise upon the spiritual and temporal government of Northumbria.[241] It displays, in the first place, the manly independence of Bede's judgment and language, and the great authority which this simple monk possessed even in the eyes of the princes and pontiffs of his country. It throws, at the same time, a fresh and full light upon the abuses which had glided into the Anglo-Saxon Church, and specially into the administration of monastic possessions.

He begins by recommending the bishop to study and meditate the Holy Scriptures, especially the epistles of St. Paul to Titus and Timothy, and the Pastoral of St. Gregory; and exhorts him to avoid idle and gossiping conversation and bad company — "for," he adds, "there are bishops who, instead of surrounding themselves with religious and chaste persons, are accompanied only by buffoons or drunkards, who take more thought how to fill their bellies than how to feed and sanctify their souls." [242]

Against the abuses of ecclesiastical government,

He then continues as follows: "Your diocese is too extensive to permit you to visit all the hamlets and out-of-the way corners in it every year. You must then establish, as coadjutors in each village priests who will preach the Word of God, celebrate the divine mysteries, and baptize. And, above all, let the priests teach

[241] "Memini te hesterno dixisse anno, cum tecum aliquot diebus legendi gratia in monasterio tuo demorarer, quod hoc etiam anno velles, cum in eundem devenires locum, me quoque, ob commune legendi studium, ad tuum accire colloquium." This letter was written in 734 or 735. Egbert took possession of the see of Wilfrid in 732.

[242] "Quod non ita loquor, quasi te aliter facere sciam, sed quia de quibusdam episcopis fama vulgatum est, quod . . . nullos secum alicujus religionis aut continentiæ viros habeant, sed potius illos qui risui, jocis, fabulis, comessationibus et ebrietatibus . . . subigantur, et magis quotidie ventrem dapibus quam mentem sacrificiis cœlestibus pascant."

all your diocesans to know the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer by heart. Those who do not understand Latin ought to be able to sing or say the *Pater* and the *Credo* in their own language; and I say this not only for the laity, but also for the clerks and monks who do not understand Latin. It is especially for the use of those uninstructed priests that I have translated the Creed and the *Pater* into English. When you thus stir up the people of God by frequent and common prayer to understand, love, hope for, and seek heavenly gifts, your paternal solicitude will receive from the Pastor of pastors a reward so much the more noble that it is seldom merited by bishops of our nation." [243] Bede entreats his friend, in continuation, to neglect no means of giving to the lay population pastors capable of teaching them the doctrines of salvation, the hatred of sins which are odious to the Lord, and the practice of good works; he insists upon frequent and even daily communion, according to the usage of the Church in Italy, Gaul, Africa, Greece, and throughout all the East. "Among us," says Bede, "thanks to the carelessness of the pastors, the most religious laymen dare not communicate except at Christmas, the Epiphany, and Easter, although there are numberless Christians, young and old, of pure life, who might without scruple approach these holy mysteries on the Sundays and feasts of the apostles and martyrs, as you have yourself seen in the holy apostolic Church of Rome." [244]

Having said this, he does not hesitate to point out to the prelate an abuse which was destined to rise throughout all the Church to a lamentable height. "Beware, dear bishop, of the crime of those who think only of drawing earthly lucre from their ministry. It is said that there are many villages in our Northumberland, situated among inaccessible hills or woods, where the arrival of a bishop to baptize, and teach

[243] "Et quia latiora sunt spatia . . . quam ut solus per omnia discurrere et in singulis viculis atque agellis verbum Dei prædicare . . . sufficias . . . necessarium est ut plures tibi sacri ordinis adjutores adsciscas. . . . Idiotas, id est, eos qui propriæ tantum linguæ notitiam habent, hæc ipsa sua lingua discere ac sedulo decantare facito. . . . Propter quod et ipse multis sæpe sacerdotibus idiotis hæc utraque . . . in linguam Anglorum translatam obtuli. Quanto enim rariora hujus sacratissimi operis in episcopis nostræ gentis exempla reperis, tanto altiora . . . præmia recipies."

[244] "Eorum quoque qui in populari adhuc vita continentur sollicitam te necesse est curam gerere, et sufficientes eis doctores vitæ salutaris adhibere memineris. . . . Cum sint innumeri innocentes et castissimæ conversationis pueri ac puellæ, juvenes et virgines, senes et anus. . . . Ipsi etiam conjugati, si quis sibi mensuram continentiæ ostendat et virtutem castitatis insinuet, idem et licenter possint et libenter facere velint."

the faith, and the distinction between good and evil, has never been witnessed, yet where no one is exempt from payment of the bishop's dues. Thus there are bishops who, far from evangelizing their flock without reward, as our Lord wills, receive, without preaching, the money which He has forbidden them, even while preaching, to accept." [245]

Bede's idea was, that with the help of the good and pious King Ceolwulf, it would be very easy for the Bishop of York, his relative and friend, to find a cure for these troubles by returning to the plan of St. Gregory the Great — re-establishing the metropolis of York, and dividing that diocese, which was still, notwithstanding the divisions which had been forced upon Wilfrid, much too large, among twelve suffragans. With his logical and practical spirit, our historian at once points out the means of arriving at this result without any fear of wounding the interests or exposing the infirmities of his order. "I know very well," he says, "that by the carelessness of the old kings, and their foolish liberality, it is difficult to find unappropriated lands to endow the new bishoprics. For this reason it appears to me that, after having deliberated on it in the great council, with the advice of the pontiff and the king, some existing monastery should be taken to be erected into a bishopric. And in order that the abbot and monks may not be tempted to opposition, they must be permitted to elect the future bishop among themselves, to be at once the head of the monastery and of the new diocese, or to choose one according to the canons outside their community, if no one suitable can be found within.[246] It

[245] "Attende quid gravissimi sceleris . . . antistes dilectissime. . . . Audivimus et fama est, quia multæ villæ ac viculi nostræ gentis in montibus sint inaccessis ac saltibus dumosis positi, ubi numquam multis transeuntibus annis sit visus antistes . . . quorum tamen nec unus quidem a tributis antistiti reddendis esse possit immunis . . . sicque fit ut episcoporum quidam non solum gratis non evangelizent." Lingard (*Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 183) believes that we have in this passage the first mention of tithes, of which there is no further notice elsewhere in Bede, and which do not appear to have been regularly established in England before the close of the eighth century.

[246] "Et quidem novimus quia per incuriam regum præcedentium, donationesque stultissimas factum est, ut non facile locus vacans ubi sedes episcopalis nova fieri debeat, inveniri valeat. . . . Quapropter commodum duxerim, habito majori concilio et consensu pontificali simul et regali edicto, prospiciatur locus aliquis monasteriorum ubi sedet episcopalis fiat. Et ne forte abbas et monachi resistere tentaverint, detur illis licentia, ut de suis ipsi eligant eum qui episcopus ordinetur et adjacentium locorum quotquos ad eamdem diœcesim pertineant, una cum ipso monasterio curam gerat episcopalem: aut si forte in ipso monasterio qui episcopus ordinari debeat inveniri nequeat, in ipsorum tamen juxta statuta canorum pendeat examine qui de sua diœcesi ordinetur antistes."

would be so much the more easy to increase, if there is room for it, the endowment of new dioceses, that there exist, as we all know, numberless places which bear the name of monasteries without keeping up a shadow of monastic observance. To appropriate their possessions, according to the authority of public assemblies, for the endowment of new bishopries, would be to substitute purity for incontinence, temperance for gluttony, and piety for vanity. Yes, there are vast and numerous establishments which are of use for nothing, neither for the service of God nor man. No monastic rule is observed among them; no advantage is drawn from them by the earls and knights who have the burden of defending our nation from the barbarians. He, then, who should make them into new bishopries would be neither a usurper nor a prevaricator: he would do a work of salvation and an act of virtue."[247]

Against disorderly monasteries.

The abuse of territorial gifts.

He then proceeds to forestall the objection which might be drawn from the sanction given by kings and national assemblies to the gifts which had endowed these pseudo-monasteries. "Would it, then, be a sin to correct the unjust decisions of old chiefs by the revision of more enlightened men, and to abrogate the lying formulas of certain scribes by the authority of priests and sages, in imitation of these good kings of Judah of whom Scripture speaks, who repaired the evil done by their impious predecessors? Let their example encourage you, in concert with our religious king, to destroy the unjust and irreligious decrees made by the former chiefs of our nation. You will thus provide at once for the spiritual and temporal necessities of our country. Otherwise we shall see at the same time the love and fear of Him who reads the heart disappear from among us, and the number of warriors diminish who are charged with the defence of our frontiers against the incursions of the barbarians; for you know better than I do, there are so many lands occupied by false monks that nothing remains to be given to the sons of nobles and old warriors; by which they are reduced either to cross the sea — deserting the country which they ought to

[247] "Sunt loca innumera . . . in monasteriorum ascripta vocabulum, sed nihil prorsus monasticæ conversationis habentia; e quibus velim aliqua de luxuria ad castitatem . . . synodica auctoritate transferantur. . . . Maxima et plurima sunt quæ . . . neque Deo neque hominibus utilia sunt, quia neque regularis secundum Deum ibi vita servatur, neque illa milites siva comites secularium potestatum qui gentem nostram a barbaris defendant possident."

have defended with their swords — or to consume their manhood in debauchery and idleness, for want of a suitable establishment on which to found a family."[248]

To these considerations of political and general interest, which throw so much light upon the military and territorial constitution of the Anglo-Saxon countries, Bede adds others which reveal not less pernicious abuses in the spiritual order.

"A still more serious crime," he says, "is committed when laymen, without either experience of or love for monastic life, give money to the kings as the price of certain lands under pretence of building monasteries there — and then claim to themselves a hereditary right over these lands by royal edicts which are afterwards confirmed by the signatures of bishops, abbots, and the great people of this world. In the estates and villages thus usurped they live according to their own pleasure, exempt from all subjection either to God or man; sometimes, though laymen, ruling over monks, or rather gathering together under the guise of monks men who have been driven out of true monasteries for disobedience, or whom they can seduce out of such, or whom they have found wandering about the country; or even taking some of their vassals, whose heads they shave, and whom they bind to a kind of monastic obedience. What a monstrous spectacle is that of these pretended cells, filled with men having wives and children, who come from the conjugal bed to manage the internal affairs of a monastery! There are even some who have the effrontery to procure similar convents for their wives, where these secular women dare to undertake the government of the servants of Christ.[249] Is there not room to say in this case, as says our proverb, that when the

[248] "Injusta principum judicia recto meliorum principum examine corrigantur, ac mendax stilus scribarum iniquorum discreta prudentium et sacerdotum sententia deleatur. . . . Ea quæ provinciæ nostræ sive secundum Deum sive secundum seculum sint utilia, prospicere: ne . . . rarescente copia militiæ secularis, absint qui fines nostros a barbarica incursione tueantur. . . . Omnino deest locus ubi filii nobilium vel emeritorum militum possessionem accipere possunt . . . ideoque vacantes ac sine conjugio, exacto tempore pubertatis, vel patriam pro qua militare debuerunt, trans mare abeuntes, relinquunt; vel . . . luxuriæ ac fornicationi deserviant."

[249] "Usurpatis sibi agellulis sive vicis, liberi exinde a divino simul et humano servitio . . . laici monachis imperantes . . . quoscumque ob culpam inobedientiæ veris expulsos monasteriis alicubi forte oberrantes invenerint . . . vel quos ipsi de suis satellitibus ad suscipiendam tonsuram promissa sibi obedientia monachica invitare quieverint. . . . Modo conjugis ac liberorum procurandarum curam gerunt: modo exurgentes de cubilibus quid intra septa monasteriorum geri debeat . . . pertractant. . . . Quæ pari stultitia cum sint laicæ, famularum sc Christi permittunt esse rectrices."

wasps makes honeycombs it is to put poison inside instead of honey?"

He then proceeds to expose the disastrous consequences of these abuses, which, however, had begun only about thirty years before. Since the death of Aldfrid and the end of Wildfrid's pontificate, he continues, there was scarcely a great noble or *ealdorman* who had not taken advantage of his position to acquire such a monastery for himself, or even for his wife, and by degrees the officials and domestics of the kings had learned to do the same. They all professed to be abbots, while at the same time governors of provinces, or officers of the royal household, submitting to a kind of tonsure, in order, by their own authority, to raise themselves, though simple laymen, not only into monks but into abbots.[250] "All these scandals," says the venerable historian, "might have been avoided or repressed had not the bishops themselves been the principal offenders or accomplices, confirming by their signatures the concessions and grants of monasteries, and selling their base indulgence for money to the false abbots.[251] . . . I entreat you by the Lord, dearest bishop, preserve your flock from the irruption of these dishonest wolves. Remember, that if you are a true and not a mercenary pastor, your duty is to examine carefully into all that is ill or well in every monastery of your diocese, in order that abbots and abbesses instructed in and subject to the holy rules may be found everywhere, worthy of presiding over a family of Christ's servants, and not an insolent and undisciplined crowd, disdainful of all spiritual rule. They must be taught resolutely that kings and great men, unless in cases of crimes against the princes themselves, have nothing to do with the monasteries, which remain under the sole authority of the bishops. It is your duty to prevent the devil from usurping those places consecrated to God, and substituting discord for peace, drunkenness for abstinence, debauchery and murder for chastity and charity. . . . I know well that my exhortations will

[250] "Nullus pene exinde præfectorum exstiteret qui non hujusmodi sibi monasterium in diebus suæ præfecturæ, suamque simul conjugem pari reatu nocivi mercatus astrinxerit. . . . Se abbates pariter et præfectos sive ministros aut famulos regis appellant . . . etsi a professione illa . . . sunt funditus extorres."

[251] "Si non ipsi pontifices magis hujusmodis sceleribus opem ferre atque adstipulari probarentur: qui . . . hujusmodi decreta injusta . . . suis subscriptionibus confirmare satagunt, eadem ipsis phylargyria dictante, ad confirmandum male scripta, qua emptores comparandum hujusmodi monasteria coacti."

meet many gainsayers, especially among those who are the authors or accomplices of the excesses I complain of. But you must treat with apostolic vigor those miserable successors of Ananias and Sapphira, who were cut off by sudden death from the society of the first monks, not even for usurping the possessions of others, but for having dishonestly retained what was their own.[252] When he describes avarice and cupidity as idolatry, the Apostle Paul manifestly justifies those who refuse their signature, even when exacted by the king, to these shameful bargains, and even those who strike through and erase all such fatal documents.[253] Do not then allow yourself to be stopped by those who, to protect the work of their covetousness, present before you charters furnished with the signatures of great men and nobles.[254] Answer them in the words of our Lord, 'All that my Father in heaven has not planted shall be rooted out.' In short, do not permit those who never attempt to struggle, even in the smallest particular, against bodily or spiritual carnality, to lull themselves to sleep by a vain confidence in their salvation; dissipate the senseless illusion of those who believe that others will redeem them after their death by the celebration of holy mysteries of which their lives have made them unworthy, or that they will be absolved from their sins for the sake of some alms thrown to the poor in the midst of their daily indulgences and passions. The hand which gives to God must be, like the conscience, pure from all crime and soil.[255] This is my judgment against the venom of avarice. I should never come to an end had I to speak at equal length of other vices, from which God give you grace, my dearest bishop, to deliver your flock."

The whole of this admirable letter is thus occupied with the indignant protest of a true monk against the false monks, who already began to infect the life of the cloister, and against the greedy and feeble bishops who sanctioned or tolerated these unworthy abuses. If the example of the Venerable Bede had always and everywhere found imitators; if

[252] "Ananiam et Saphiram monachorum collegio indignos etiam corporis morte mulctavit . . . et quidem illi non aliena colligere, sed sua incongrue retinere maluerunt."

[253] "Qui vel subscriptione avari mercatus, rege licet imperante, manum substraxerunt."

[254] "Qui si chartas protulerunt in defensionem concupiscentiarum suarum ascriptas, ac nobilium personarum subscriptione confirmatas."

[255] "Quum manus ipse et conscientia quæ munus offerat Deo, munda a peccatis debeat esse et absoluta."

pure and courageous voices like his had risen in the bosom of the Church, especially in recent ages, to warn her against the incoming of corruption, hypocrisy, and secular covetousness, it may well be believed that the homicidal hand of Protestant or revolutionary vandalism would never have succeeded in sweeping away from the entire surface of the Christian world the glorious establishments founded by the munificence and piety of our fathers.

One thing must be gladly admitted, which is, that the bold freedom and noble independence of Bede did him no harm, and lessened in no way the great and just reputation which he enjoyed throughout England, a fame which soon spread into all Europe, and went on increasing after his death to such a point, that the council of Aix-la-Chapelle, held a hundred years afterwards, described him as an "admirable doctor."[256]

He is accused of heresy in popular songs.

This pleasant and glorious life was not, however, without a cloud. He excited the criticism of violent and narrow spirits, like all other superior men. They even went so far as to treat him as a heretic, because he had in his Chronology combated the then general opinion that the world was to last only six thousand years, and because, in his division of the six ages of the world, he had appeared a little uncertain about the date ordinarily fixed as that of the Incarnation. This accusation of heresy made so much noise, that it was discussed even among the peasants, who scoffed at it in their drinking songs; a fact which proves that if the great were then, as always, exposed to calumny, the popular masses of the day took a singular interest in their good fame. Bede, who took credit to himself for having always kept with scrupulous care within the limits of the strictest orthodoxy, was at once troubled and rendered indignant by this imputation. He grew pale with surprise and horror, as he says to one of his friends, a monk, in an apologetic letter — a letter full of pride and energy, which he charges his correspondent to read to Wilfrid, Bishop of York, who seems to have given a certain encouragement to the slander by suffering it to be uttered at table in his presence.[257]

[256] "Quid venerabilis et modernis temporibus doctor admirabilis, Beda presbyter sentiat, videamus." — *Concil. Aquisgran.*, ii. præf., l. iii., ann. 836, ed. Coletti, ix. 875.

[257] "Hæc tristi mox admistione confudit, addendo videlicet, quod me audires a lascivientibus rusticis inter hæreticos per pocula decantari. . . . Ex-

His intimacy with the monks of Lindisfarne.

If, however, he had some enemies, he had more friends. Among these, in the first rank, it is pleasant to find the monks of Lindisfarne. Their friendship with Bede maintains and proves the link which, notwithstanding certain differences of origin and opinion, attaches the island-cradle of the Christian faith in Northumbria to the last of the great monastic foundations, and the last of the great monks who illustrated that glorious coast. Bede asked that his name should be inscribed on the roll of monks in the monastery founded by St. Aïdan. He specially desired this favor in order that his soul after death might have a share in the masses and prayers of that numerous community as if he had been one of themselves.[258]

His last moments.

This pious anxiety to assure himself of the help of prayer for his soul after his death is apparent at every step in his letters. It imprints the last seal of humble and true Christianity on the character of the great philosopher, whose life was so full of interest, and whose last days have been revealed to us in minute detail by an eye-witness. Although the narrative has been often republished,[259] the reader does not tire of returning to it, and it must find a place here, for no historic document brings more clearly before our eyes the life, at once spiritual and literary, of the Anglo-Saxon cloisters. "You desire and expect of me," writes a monk of Yarrow to one of his absent brethren, "to tell you how Bede, our father and master, the beloved of God, departed from this world. . . . Nearly a fortnight before Easter he was seized by an extreme

17th April, 734.

horrui, fateor, et pallens percunctabar, cujus hæreseos arguerer. . . . Quoniam illo præsente atque audiente insipientius sum prius appetitus conviciis, ipso etiam nunc audiente et dijudicante, . . . quam immeritus eadem convicia sum perpessus appareat. . . . Quod utique in cœna illa in qua poculo debrius culpare studuit." — *Epist. ad Plegwinum monachum*, t. i. pp. 144–154. This Wilfrid is not the great St. Wilfrid, but Wilfrid II., who was Bishop of York from 717 to 732, after St. John of Beverley, and before Egbert.

[258] "Me defuncto, pro redemptione animæ meæ, quasi familiaris et vernaculi vestri, orare et missas facere, et nomen meum inter vestra scribere dignemini . . . ut in albo vestræ sanctæ congregationis meum nunc quoque nomen appareret." — *Præfatio ad Vit. S. Cuthberti.*

[259] In the last place by Ozanam, who has made a perfect picture of the life of Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Church of the eighth century. The name of the author of the narrative is Cuthbert; he was a disciple of Bede, and wrote from Yarrow to one of his fellow-pupils, named Cuthwine, who was established in a distant monastery, probably one belonging to the Celtic ritualists, according to a passage quoted by Lingard, *Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. ii. p. 197.

weakness, in consequence of his difficulty of breathing, but without great pain. He continued thus until Ascension, always joyous and happy, giving thanks to God day and night, and even every hour of the night and day. He gave us our lessons daily, and employed the rest of his time in chanting psalms; and passed every night, after a short sleep, in joy and thanksgiving, but without closing his eyes. From the moment of awaking he resumed his prayers and praises to God, with his arms in the form of a cross. O happy man! He sang sometimes texts from St. Paul and other scriptures, sometimes lines in our own language, for he was very able in English poetry."[260] Here the narrator interrupts himself to quote ten lines in Anglo-Saxon received from the lips of the dying Bede, and expressed in that short, sharp, and striking rhythm which characterizes the verses of the shepherd Ceadmon, with which Bede has made us acquainted. "Before our forced departure," thus runs the song, "no man is more wise than he needs be; no man knows how much he ought to search, before leaving this world, what shall be the judgment of the soul for good or evil, after the day of death."[261] "He also sang," continues the witness, "anthems according to his liturgy and ours — among others, the following: 'O King of Glory, who now hast mounted in triumph above the skies, leave us not like orphans, but send us the spirit of truth promised to our fathers.' At these words, *like orphans*, he burst into tears. An hour after, he repeated the same anthem, and we mingled our tears with his. Sometimes we wept, and sometimes we read, but we never read without weeping. Thus passed the forty days from Easter to Ascension. He was always at the height of joy, thanking God for his sickness.[262] He said with St. Paul, 'The Lord scourgeth every one that he receiveth;' and with St. Ambrose, 'I have not lived so

26th May.

[260] "Lætus et gaudens . . . immo horis omnibus . . . totam noctem in lætitia et gratiarum actione pervigil ducebat, nisi quantum modicus somnus impediret. . . . In nostra quoque lingua, quæ est Anglica, ut erat doctus in nostris carminibus, nonnulla dixit."

[261] These lines, omitted by Mabillon in his edition of Cuthbert's story, which is taken from Simeon of Durham, are found in a manuscript of St. Gall, almost a contemporary of Bede, and there is no doubt of their authenticity. Cf. LINGARD, p. 409.

[262] "Prorupit in lacrymas . . . luximus cum illo . . . altera vice legimus, altera ploravimus. Immo semper cum fletu legimus, ut tali lætitia dies usque ad diem deduximus, et ille multum gaudebat."

as to blush at the thought of living with you; but I do not fear to die, because we have a good master.'[263]

"During all these days, in addition to the lessons he gave us and the psalms he sang with us, he undertook two pieces of work; a translation of the Gospel according to John into our English tongue for the use of the Church of God, and some extracts from Isidore, Bishop of Seville. 'For,' said he, 'I would not have my children read lies, nor that after my death they should give themselves up to fruitless work.' On the Tuesday before Ascension he found himself much worse; his breathing became difficult, and his feet were swollen. He continued, nevertheless, to dictate in good spirits, and sometimes added, 'Make haste to learn, for I know not how long I may remain with you, or if my Creator may call me shortly.' On the eve of the feast, at the first dawn of morning, he desired that what had been commenced should be quickly finished, and we worked till the hour of tierce. Then we went to the procession with the relics of the saints, as the solemn occasion required. But one of us remained by him and said to him, 'There is still a chapter wanting, beloved father; would it fatigue you to speak any more?' Bede answered, 'I am still able to speak; take your pen, make it, and write rapidly.' The other obeyed. At the hour of nones he sent for the priests of the monastery, and distributed to them incense, spices, and fine linen, which he had kept as precious things; then bade them farewell, praying each of them to say masses for him. Thus passed his last day till the evening. Then the disciple of whom I have spoken said to him, 'Beloved master, there remains only one verse which is not written.' 'Write it then quickly,' he answered. And the young man having completed it in a few minutes, cried, 'Now it is finished.' 'You say truly, it is finished,' he said. 'Take my head in your arms and turn me, for I have great consolation in turning towards the holy place where I have prayed so much.' Thus, lying on the floor of his cell, he sang for the last time, 'Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,' and gave up the ghost as he pronounced the last of these divine names."[264]

[263] S. Paulinus, in *Vit. S. Ambrosii.*

[264] "Nolo ut discipuli mei mendacium legant. . . . Totum illum diem hilariter dictabat. . . . Diserte cum festinatione. . . . Adhuc magister dilectissime, capitulum unum deest; videtur ne tibi difficile plus te interrogari? Facile est, accipe tuum calamum et tempera, et festinanter scribe. . . . Curre velociter et presbyteros adhuc ad me. . . . Quædam pretiosa in mea

The monastic sanctuary towards which the dying look of Bede was turned still remains in part, if we may believe the best archæologists, and his memory has survived the changes of time. An old oaken chair is still shown which he is supposed to have used. It is the only existing relic of this great saint. For he was a saint by the same title and in the same rank as the most illustrious in the Anglo-Saxon calendar. The title of Venerable, which was given to him only in the ninth century by a kind of universal consent, did not then as now imply an inferior position to that of saint or blessed in the celestial hierarchy. Like all the other saints of the period, without exception, he was canonized by popular veneration, tacitly approved by the Church. Various miracles established or confirmed the fame of his sanctity: altars were consecrated to his memory; many pilgrims came to Yarrow to visit his tomb; his relics were stolen in the eleventh century, as so often happened, by a priest inspired by too ardent devotion, and carried to Durham, where they were placed with those of St. Cuthbert. They were an object of worship to the faithful up to the general profanation under Henry VIII., who pulled down the shrine and threw the bones on a dunghill along with those of all the other holy apostles and martyrs of Northumberland.[265]

It must, however, be admitted that his place in the worship of the faithful has not lasted so long as the glory attached to his name and the great fame which, rising in his native country, spread so rapidly over all Christendom.[266]

capsella habes, id est piperem, oraria et incensa. . . . Accipe caput meum in manus tuas, quia multum me delectat sedere ex adverso loco sancto meo, in quo orare solebam. . . . In pavimento casulæ suæ decantans."

[265] If we may believe a competent judge, Mr. Jewitt (*Gentleman's Magazine*, Dec., 1864), the choir of the little church now standing at Yarrow is as old as the church built by Benedict Biscop, and *inhabited*, as we may say, by Venerable Bede. This is the remnant which was discovered roofless by the three monks who, according to Simeon of Durham, visited the ruins in 1075. The learned archæologist thinks that he recognizes, in the ornaments and in the primitive bays of this choir, the characteristics of Saxon architecture. We confess that it is difficult to conceive how this low and petty construction can represent any portion whatever of the edifice built and ornamented with so much magnificence by the founder of Yarrow, and described with such enthusiasm by the most illustrious of his guests. The tower, indeed, which is of fine Norman or Roman architecture, may very well date from the partial restoration in 1075. An inscription, evidently more modern than its date, fixes the dedication of the church on April 24, 681, in the 15th year of King Egfrid, and *Ceolfridi abbatis ejusdem ecclesia Deo auctore conditoris, anno IV.*

[266] "Anglia te celebrat: te totus personat orbis."

— Ancient epitaph quoted by Leland, *Collectanea*, vol. iii. book iv. c. 23.

His fame did honor to monastic institutions in general. Bede appeared to the Catholic world a model of that virtue and knowledge which the cloister was to make the peculiar property of Christian society. In him the great Roman monachism which he had seen triumph over Celtic influences found its personification. The sword of his words, said his epitaph, was the safeguard of the fortresses occupied by his religious brethren.[267]

But it was especially the English nation, the last newcomer among Catholic nations, which had occasion to take pride in the great man given by her to Christendom. All the kingdoms of the Heptarchy claimed a share in the glory which could not be allowed to remain the exclusive possession of the Northumbrians — and the Anglo-Saxon missionaries, scattered through Germany, rivalled the monks who remained in their native island in the faithfulness of their devotion to his noble memory.[268]

The nations of Catholic Europe envied England the possession of so great a doctor, the first among the offspring of barbarous races who had won a place among the doctors of the Church. His illustrious successors, Boniface and Alcuin, emulated each other in celebrating his merits and services in the interest of souls, and in order to set him up as a permanent model to future generations.[269] Alcuin insists specially upon this with a precision of details which gives us one proof the more how entirely the likings and manners of the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of England are reflected in the

[267] "Crystallus patriæ, gregis astrum, lumen avorum,
Laus juris, bajulus legis, honorque jacet.
Beda datus sacris, gravitate senex, puer annis,
Devotæ mentis æthera thure replet. . . .
Ense pio verbi confratrum castra tuetur
Ne Christi miles, hoste ruente, ruat."

— Epitaph quoted by Mabillon from a MS. belonging to De Thou.

"Beda, Dei famulus, monachorum nobile sidus,
Finibus e terræ profuit Ecclesiæ."

— Another epitaph quoted by Arnold Wion.

[268] "Et rectum quidem mihi videtur ut tota gens Anglorum in omnibus provinciis, ubicumque reperti sunt, gratias Deo referant, quia tam mirabilem virum illis in sua natione donavit." — S. Bonifacii et Lulli *Epist.*, ed. Jaffé, number 134. See the letter written by an abbot of Wearmouth to Lul, Archbishop of Mayence, thanking him for having sent from Germany a silken stuff intended to wrap the relics of Bede.

[269] "Rogamus ut aliqua de opusculis sagacissimi investigatorius Scripturarum Bedan (*sic*) monachi, quem nuper in domo Dei apud vos, vice candelæ ecclesiasticæ, scientia, scripturarum fulsisse audivimus, conscripta nobis transmittere dignemini." — Bonifacii *Epist.*, 672, ed. Jaffé.

tastes of the modern English. "Remember," he writes to the monks of the community of Yarrow which Bede had made famous — "remember the nobility of your fathers, and be not the unworthy sons of such great ancestors; look at your many books, at the beauty of your churches and monastic buildings. Let your young men learn to persevere in the praises of God, and not in driving foxes out of their holes, or wearing out their strength running after hares. What folly to leave the footsteps of Christ, and run after the trail of a fox! Look at the noblest doctor of our country, Bede; see what zeal he showed for knowledge from his youth, and the glory which he has received among men, though that is much less important and less dazzling than his reward before God. Stir up, then, the minds of your sleepers, by his example; study his works, and you will be able to draw from them, both for yourselves and others, the secret of eternal beauty.[270]

The fame of Bede has derived a special and increasing lustre from the fact that he was not only the first and most remarkable of Anglo-Saxons, but that, were he set aside, everything else concerning them would fall into obscurity;[271] thus it is not without reason that he has been compared to Homer, who rose like a resplendent meteor amid the night which precedes and the night which follows his appearance upon the horizon of Greek history.

The dark night of idolatry which covered Northumbria before the holy predecessors and contemporaries of Bede, has been replaced by the dark night of industry. The working of the coal-mines has transformed the face of the country. The light of day is positively darkened by thick volumes and heavy clouds of smoke belched out without intermission by the manufactories and workshops which are fed by the inexhaustible mineral wealth of the country. Newcastle, North and South Shields, Sunderland, Stockton, Darlington, Hull, all the centres of the coal-trade, have replaced in the atten-

[270] "Assuescant pueri laudibus astare superni Regis, non vulpium fodere cavernas, non leporum fugaces sequi cursus. Quam impium est Christi amittere obsequia et vulpium sequi vestigia! Discant pueri Scripturas sacras. . . . Recogitate nobilissimum hujus temporis magistrum Bedam presbyterum . . . qualem nunc habet inter homines laudem." — ALCUINI, *Epist.* 13, ed. Froben, vol. i. p. 22.

[271] Certain contemporary chronicles find nothing to describe in the history of England during the seventh and eighth centuries except the existence of Bede. "Beda presbyter et monachus claret in Anglia." — *Chron. Holland Vetustiss.*, ad. an. 696, quoted by Mackintosh, vol. i. p. 83.

tion and regard of men the old monastic cradles of Christian faith and civilization, Lindisfarne and Yarrow, Tynningham and Coldingham, Tynemouth and Wearmouth, Hartlepool and Whitby. But what a contrast, even if we go no further than the surface, between the aspect of the country of old and that of to-day! The much-prized coal has covered this fine country with a veil of mourning. The verdure of the woods and fields is discolored by it, the limpid waters soiled, the purity of the air infected, the light of the sun intercepted. Everything disposes us to believe that these are but material tokens of the internal and moral darkness, in the midst of which struggles the vast and formidable population which swarms in those craters of British commerce. The frightful density of these unknown and impenetrable masses conceals abysses of ignorance, vice, wretchedness, and resentment. There Paganism is restored. Notwithstanding many generous efforts, partial remedies, and honorable exceptions — notwithstanding the observance, still compulsory and respected, of the Sunday rest, — the love of lucre has created armies of slaves, tools without souls, but already longing, and with good reason, for a better fate, for a condition less painful than that, the duration and aggravation of which ought to fill with trembling every Christian and patriotic heart.

The light of faith and the moral law is still more wanting to them than daylight. Buried alive in their mines and manufactories, without pontiffs, without spiritual guides, a prey to all the disorders, excesses, and forgetfulnesses which ever accompany the labor of a crowd, strangers to the thought of God, to any hope in a future life, to habits of modesty,[272] victims and instruments of the worship of mammon, they stand there like a perpetual menace to the blind egotism and formalism of the materialists of our age.

No man can admire more than I do the marvels of human intelligence and activity realized by the free genius of the English race; no man does more sincere homage to its natural and unconquerable instincts of religion. But who could behold without fear, in that district, once so fruitful in sanctuaries of prayer, virtue, and moral and intellectual life, the religious indifference and fierce thirst for gain which replace almost everywhere the tender and vigilant solicitude of the Church for souls? Who could be other than alarmed at sight

[272] See p. 496, note 83, what has been said of the facts revealed by the Parliamentary Commission in the coal districts.

of the deserted condition, the spiritual nullity, in which so many millions of our fellow-creatures are living? How can we cease to regret the days when the obedient fervor of the people answered so well to the zeal, knowledge, and disinterestedness of the clergy? and when, like the lighthouses which we now see everywhere, on the headlands, at the river's mouth, at the edge of rocky reefs, and along all the course of that dangerous and much frequented coast, offering their tutelary light to the sailor, there rose upon those shores, then desert unknown, and inhabited only by a few savages, the sparkling lights, increasing from year to year, of Lindisfarne, Yarrow, Whitby, Coldingham, Wearmouth, and Tynemouth — centres of intellectual and moral life, as laborious as it was pure!

Perhaps the day may yet come — and may it not be far distant! — when, as of old, amid the wonders and perils of modern activity, new centres of charity, enlightenment, and peace may light up one after the other, like so many celestial beacons to guide and warn souls in their pilgrimage towards eternal life.

CHAPTER V.

THE ROYAL MONKS.

The star of Northumbria pales, notwithstanding the erection of the see of York into an archbishopric. — Sad end of the lineage of Oswy. — King Ceolfrid, to whom Bede dedicates his History, becomes a monk at Lindisfarne. — His successor Eadbert follows his example. — Other monk-kings. — Almost each dynasty of the Heptarchy furnishes its share: in East Anglia, Sigebert, who dies on the field of battle; in Essex, Sebbi, who leads back his people to the faith — his desire to die in solitude; and Offa, who dies at Rome; in Mercia, which inherited the preponderating power of Northumbria, Coenred, the travelling companion and fellow-novice of Offa; Ethelred, founder, monk, and abbot of Bardeney. — Another Mercian king, Ceolred, dies in a debauch. — Ethelbald, pursued by Ceolred, takes refuge in the marsh of Croyland with the hermit Guthlac, who predicts to him that he will be King of Mercia. — What Guthlac had been before he became an anchorite. — His solitary life resembles those of some of the most illustrious saints in the monastic order. — Death of Guthlac. — Foundation of the celebrated Abbey of Croyland upon the site of his cell. — Continuation and end of the reign of Ethelbald. — Re-

monstrances of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany. — The supremacy passes from Mercia to Wessex. — Three West Saxon kings abdicate to become monks or pilgrims to Rome: Centwin; Ceadwalla, the friend of Wilfrid, who lives just long enough to be baptized by the Pope; and Ina the friend of St. Aldhelm. — Reign of Ina, the legislator, victor, and pacificator of the Britons; restorer of the Celtic sanctuary of Glastonbury, the first protector of St. Boniface. — In consequence of a surprise prepared for him by his wife, he goes to Rome as a penitent to die, and founds the *Schola Saxonum* there. — Crowd of Anglo-Saxon pilgrims of both sexes to Rome. — Abuses and disorders. — False monks and false pilgrims. — The age of gold a chimera in the Church as elsewhere.

"Must lose
The name of king? O' God's name, let it go.
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown;
My figured goblets for a dish of wood;
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff;
My subjects for a pair of carved saints;
And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little, little grave, an obscure grave."
— SHAKESPEARE, *Richard II.*

BEDE dedicated his *History of the English* to the king of his dear Northumbria, Ceolwulf, whose tender solicitude for monastic interests made him hope for an approaching reform of the abuses of ecclesiastical government in the north of England.[273] But two years after the death of the great monastic historian, Ceolwulf himself became a monk. He was of the race of Ida the Burner, sprung, however, from another branch than that from which came all those descendants of Ethelfrid the Ravager, whose connection with Aïdan and Wilfrid, Hilda and Ebba, Lindisfarne and Melrose, has already occupied us so long.

Sad end of the line of Oswy. 705-716.

The line of Ethelfrid had come to a sad conclusion in that young Osred, who came to the throne during the last struggles of Wilfrid, and whom the people had taken pleasure in regarding as the adopted son of the great bishop.[274] Far from walking in the footsteps of his father Aldfrid and his grandfather Oswy, he has left no trace of sympathy with the institutions and ideas represented among the Anglo-Saxons by the monks. From an early age he manifested all the inclinations of a tyrant, abandoning himself to frequent explosions of wild passion, which show only

[273] "Pro insita sibi dilectione pietatis, quicquid ad regulam pietatis pertinet, firma protinus intentione adjuvare curabit." — *Epist. ad Ecgbertum*, c. 5.

[274] See p. 430.

too clearly how hard was the task of the doctors and ministers of Christian purity among the Teutonic races. It was the delight of his precocious and impetuous libertinism to outrage virgins consecrated to the Lord, and he went from monastery to monastery to seek his sacrilegious prey.[275] On the other hand, he obliged the nobles whom he oppressed, when he deigned to spare their lives in his massacres, to be shaven, and to bury themselves against their will in the cloisters.[276] A violent death put a stop to his evil ways.

Licentiousness of the young king Osred. 716.

But already the star of Northumbria had paled beyond remedy. The final erection of the great northern bishopric of York into a metropolis, to which all the bishoprics north of the Humber were to be subject, was not sufficient to restore to Northumbria the power which she had exercised under kings like Oswald and Oswy and bishops like Aïdan and Wilfrid. Egbert, the Bishop of York, the correspondent of Bede, and a prince of the reigning dynasty, obtained from Pope Gregory II., after repeated requests, the re-establishment of the metropolitan dignity, which had been at first bestowed upon the see of York by St. Gregory the Great, but which, since the flight of Paulinus, had fallen into disuse, and which the later decrees of Popes Vitalianus and Agathon had seemed to sacrifice to the supremacy of Canterbury. This restoration, however, was of advantage only to the splendor of the new metropolis, and in no way to the kingdom of which it was the capital, as indeed the authority of Canterbury, so long universal and always undisputed, had not given the slightest

The fortunes of Northumbria begin to fail.

[275] "Osredum spiritus luxuriæ fornicantem et per monasteria nonnarum sacratas virgines stuprantem et furentem agitavit, usquequo ipse gloriosum regnum et juvenilem vitam et ipsam luxuriosam animam contemptibili et despecta morte perdidit." — S. Bonifacii *Epist.* 59 *ad Ethelbaldum.* "Turpem vitam sanctimonialium stupris exagitans." — Guill. Malmesb., i. 53.

[276] "Non proceres veneratus erat: non denique Christum.
Hic igitur multos miseranda morte peremit.
Ast alios cogit summo servire parenti,
Inque monasterii attonsos consistere septis. . . .
Anglorum proceres nimium trucidante tyranno
Servitium Domini miles præfatus inibat."

— Ethelwolfi *Carmen de Abbatibus et Viris Piis Lindisfarnens.*, c. 2 and 4. Mabillon (*Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. iv. p. 317), in publishing this poem, proved that, notwithstanding its title, this was not the great Monastery of Lindisfarne of which we have so largely spoken, but another monastery of the same name, founded by Duke Eadmund, "dux nobilis natu et moribus," one of those whom King Osred forced to become monks.

supremacy over the rest of the Heptarchy to the kings of Kent.

King Ceolwulf becomes a monk at Lindisfarne.

After two obscure reigns, Ceolwulf attempted in vain to struggle against the disorder and decadence of his country. He was vanquished, and made captive by enemies whose names are not recorded, and had to submit, as happened to more than one Merovingian prince, to receive the tonsure by compulsion, and was shut up in a convent. He escaped, however, regained the crown, and reigned for some time in a manner which gained the applause of Bede, and weighed with the Pope in his decision in respect to the metropolis of York. But, after a reign of eight years, a regret, or an unconquerable desire, for that monastic life which had been formerly forced upon him against his will, seized him. He made the best provisions possible for the security of his country, and for a good understanding between the spiritual and temporal authorities, nominating as his successor a worthy prince of his race, the brother of Archbishop Egbert. Then giving up the cares of power, and showing himself truly the master of the wealth he resigned, he cut his long beard, had his head shaved in the form of a crown, and retired to bury himself anew at Lindisfarne, in the chief monastic sanctuary of his country.

737-767.

He there passed the last thirty years of his life in study and happiness.[277] He had, while king, enriched this monastery with many great gifts, and obtained permission for the use of wine and beer for monks who, up to that time, according to the rigid rule of ancient Catholic discipline, had been allowed no beverage but water and milk.

His successor, Eadbert, follows his example.

His successor, Eadbert, followed his example. After having, during a reign of twenty-one years, victoriously contended against the Picts, Scots Mercians and Welsh — after having received presents and offers of alliance from the first of the Carlovingians, Pepin the Short, — he became a monk at York, where he had already founded what was then called a very noble library, and where he enrolled himself among the monks who constituted the clergy of his brother the archbishop's metropolis. He lived there for two years, preferring, says an annalist, the

[277] "Vere beatus et litterarum scientia sufficienter constitutus." — Guill. Malmesb., i. 64. "Sponte divitiarum non servus, sed dominus, quasi magnus viles abjecit." — Henri Huntingd., *Hist.*, l. iv. p. 340. "Barbam deposuit, coronam accepit." — Simeon Dunelm., *De Gest. Reg.*, p. 69, and 139, ap. Twysden, vol. i.

service of God to all the kingdoms of the earth, and rapt by his violent love for the celestial country.[278] Care has been taken to prove that he received the Roman tonsure, that of St. Peter, and not that of the Celts, which is the last mention in history of a difference which, a century earlier, had stirred up so many tempests.[279]

Other monk kings

These two kings of Northumbria were not the first or only ones who embraced monastic life. Eadbert, indeed, is the eighth pointed out by English chroniclers as having preferred the eight beatitudes of voluntary poverty to the grandeurs of this world.[280] Certain annalists even go so far as to count more than thirty kings or queens of the different Anglo-Saxon kingdoms who entered the new cloisters during the seventh and eighth centuries.[281]

What transformation had thus passed upon those heathens, savage descendants of Odin, impetuous and bloody chieftains of a race which breathed only war and pillage, and knew no greater shame than to die a peaceful death! We see them penetrated by the spirit of gentleness and concord, seeking union, fraternity, even equality, and that sometimes with the humblest of their subjects, under the Benedictine habit, in the nightly chant of psalms, in the peaceful labors of agriculture or of the monastic library. They sought, they aspired to that retreat, as the crown of their warlike exploits and their political and military career. But it was little to the satisfaction of the Anglo-Saxons to see themselves thus abandoned by their kings. The spirit of proud independence which made them, like all the other Teutonic nations, so often rebellious and intractable, did not expel from their minds a passionate affection, or rather a mysterious worship, for the old blood of the first chiefs of the conquest. They made vain efforts to keep their kings back from the cloister, and reserved to themselves the right of reclaiming them by their own will or against it, in order to put them at the head of the army, and march against the enemy under their orders. Such was the fate, as has been seen,[282] of King Sigebert of East

[278] Sim. Dunelm., *Hist. Dunelm. Eccles.*, l. ii. c. 3, *ibid.*

[279] "Dei amoris causa et cœlestis patriæ violentia, accepta S. Petri tonsura." — *App. ad Bedam*, ann. 758.

[280] "Qui pro regno temporali commutaverunt æternum, ut octo beatitudinum jucunditatem, quæ voluntariæ paupertati debetur, pro futuro haberent in cœlis." — Rich. Cirenc., p. 242. Mabillon counts eight before Eadbert, who is the ninth on his list. — *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, vol. iii. p. 463.

[281] Stevens, continuation of Dugdale, vol. i. p. 19.

[282] See p. 280.

Anglia, the first of the Anglo-Saxons who entered the cloister, and who, torn from his cell by his desperate subjects to lead them against the pitiless Penda, ended his life, like so many of his heathen ancestors, on the field of battle.

Each dynasty furnished its contingent to the monastic order.

Each of the dynasties of the Heptarchy furnished in succession its contingent to the new army. Like the Uffings of East Anglia, and the descendants of the Man of Fire in Northumberland, the children of the god Saxnote, whom the baptized Saxons[283] were made to abjure along with the gods Thor and Woden,

Sebbi, King of Essex.

had also their tonsured king. This race reigned over the Saxons of the East, whom King Sebbi had the happiness of bringing back to the faith, after their first defection.[284] The same king, who had reigned for

665-695.

thirty years as a faithful soldier of the King of kings, obtained, not without difficulty, the consent of his wife to enable him to assume before he died the monastic dress for which he had long sighed. But though he thus believed himself to have become a monk indeed, this descendant of Scandinavian gods and heroes, with the heart of a king under his monastic robe, feared, according to Bede, that, dying in his bed, he might seem to be overcome by suffering.[285] In the anguish of his last illness he trembled lest, while struggling against the terrors of death, pain might tear from him cries or gestures unworthy of him. For this reason he would have no spectator of his last moments except the Bishop of London. This prelate, who had invested him with the monk's black robe, had the consolation of seeing him give up his last sigh in perfect peace, and buried him in his own monastic cathedral of St. Paul, where for a thousand

1666.

years, until the time of the great fire which consumed that famous edifice under Charles II., was to be seen the immense stone coffin which contained the body of the monk-king, whose frame must have been as gigantic as his heart was manful.[286]

[283] Lappenberg, p. 114.

[284] See p. 291.

[285] "Vitam privatam et monachicam cunctis regni divitiis et honoribus præferens, quam et olim jam, si non obstinatus conjugis animus divortium negaret, subiisset. . . . Cumque annos triginta in regno miles regni cœlestis exegisset . . . habitum religionis, quem diu desiderabat, accepit. . . . Correptus infirmitate maxima, timere cœpit homo animi regalis, ne ad mortem veniens, tanto affectus dolore, aliquid indignum suæ personæ vel ore proferret vel aliorum motu gereret membrorum." — Bede, iv. 11.

[286] Note by Smith in his edition of Bede. "This is the first example I know of the devout idea so general, in later ages, of dying in the dress of a monk." — Fleury, l. xi. c. 3.

Fifteen years after the death of Sebbi, his successor and grandnephew, King Offa, imitated his example while still in the fulness of youth and all delights. Though a man beloved and sought after by all, he gave up his betrothed bride, his family, country, and crown, and, resisting the passionate remonstrances of his subjects, went away to embrace monastic life, not even in an English cloister, but at Rome. The young Offa was accompanied in his pilgrimage and sacrifice by Coenred, the King of the Mercians, detached on his side from the world by witnessing the last moments of one of his best knights,[287] who died in despair from having voluntarily kept back from confession.[288] Before leaving England they were both present at the last act of the great Wilfrid's apostolic life — the dedication of the new Monastery of Evesham, which they had endowed and freed from all temporal jurisdiction.[289] When they arrived at Rome, both these kings received the tonsure and cowl from the hands of Pope Constantinus, before the Confession of St. Peter, and, after some years of penitent life, they passed from the tomb of the apostles to celestial blessedness, to enjoy the society of the saints forever.[290]

Offa, King of Essex. 709.

Coenred, King of Mercia.

Since the death of the last Northumbrian Bretwalda, Oswy, and especially since the overthrow of his son Egfrid in his struggle with the Picts, Mercia had acquired the ascendency which was departing from Northumbria. The Mercians, under the warlike descendants of the terrible Penda, and thanks to the military spirit which inspired its people and race, swayed the Anglo-Saxon Heptarchy for nearly a century.

Mercia becomes the most important nation of the Heptarchy. 670-685.

[287] "Vir in laico habitu atque officio militari positus." — Bede, v. 13. William of Malmesbury calls him "miles." — *Gest. Reg. Angl.*, l. i. c. 78. Turner proves that the order of knighthood existed among the Anglo-Saxons long before the Norman conquest. — *Hist. of Anglo-Saxons*, book viii. c. 12.

[288] The vision of this knight may be read in Bede, *l. c.* Two other passages in Bede (iii. 22 and v. 10) seem to prove that in his time the word "miles" was applied not only to all fighting men, but to nobles or patricians.

[289] See p. 439.

[290] "Coinred qui regno Merciorum nobilissime tempore aliquanto præfuit, nobilius multo sceptra regni reliquit . . . monachus factus ad limina Apostolorum, in precibus, jejuniis, et eleemosynis, usque ad diem permansit ultimum. . . . Offa juvenis amantissimæ ætatis et venustatis, totæque suæ genti ad tenenda servandaque regni sceptra exoptatissimus . . . reliquit uxorem, agros, cognatos et patriam, attonsus et in monachico vitam habitu complens, ad visonem beatorum apostolorum in cœlis diu desideratam pervenit." — Beda, *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 19.

Coenred, who died a monk at Rome after having fought valiantly against the Britons, was Penda's grandson; and he was far from being the only recruit which the family of the dauntless champion of old Paganism was to furnish to the monastic order.[291] His own son, and second successor, Ethelred, the predecessor of Coenred upon the throne of Mercia, touched by divine grace, after a long and warlike reign, entered as a simple monk into the Monastery of Bardeney which he had founded, and ruled it for ten years as abbot before he died the death of a saint.[292] This is the Ethelred with whom we have already made acquaintance, first as the enemy and then as the devoted friend of Wilfrid,[293] whose cause he sustained with all the authority conferred on him by his double rank as monk and monarch.

Ethelred, King of Mercia, becomes a monk at Bardeney. 704-716.

These two kings, however, who were so entirely devoted to the Benedictine institution as to enroll themselves in it till the end of their worthy existence, were succeeded on the throne of Mercia by a prince of a very different stamp. Ceolred, like the young Northumbrian king of whom we recently spoke, did not content himself with despising the rights and liberties guaranteed to the monasteries by the charters of his predecessors; he took from them the young and beautiful virgins there consecrated to the Lord, for the gratification of his own passions. He died in one of his orgies among his earls, not only unrepentant, but calling upon the devil, and cursing the Christian priests with their Gospel.[294] It was perhaps the last out-

Excesses of King Ceolred. 709-771.

[291] See in the Appendix the table of his monastic descendants. The line of Mercian kings after Penda is as follows: —

626-655. Penda.
656-675. Wulphere, son of Penda.
675-704. Ethelred, brother of Wulphere.
704-709. Coenred, son of Wulphere.
709-716. Coelred, son of Ethelred.
716-757. Ethelbald, called *Clito*, grandson of a brother of Penda.
757-797. Offa, great-grandson of the same.

It is well known that among the Merovingians it was often the eldest or most popular prince of the reigning dynasty who succeeded to the crown to the injury of the direct heir, who might regain his rights at a later period if he lived long enough to see the question of his succession once more opened.

[292] "Omnipotentis benignitate visitatus fit monachus." — Henric. Huntingd., *Hist.*, l. iv. p. 337.

[293] See p. 430.

[294] "In stupratione et adulterio nonnarum commorans . . . nam Ceolredum prædecessorem tuum stupratorem sanctimonialium et ecclesiasticorum privilegiorum fractorum splendide cum suis comitibus epulantem spiritu

break of conquered heathenism: not certainly that heathen morals and lusts were forever extirpated from the bosom of these wild races, but since that time their ascendency has never been so great as to lead an Anglo-Saxon prince to the point of making a public denial of the Gospel.

The *Clito* Ethelbald, pursued by Ceolred.

After this worthy grandson of the savage Penda, the Mercian throne fell to a collateral scion of the race, Ethelbald, known under the name of *Clito* or *Childe*, which was then used among the Anglo-Saxons, as that of *Infanto* in Spain at a later period, to designate the princes of the reigning dynasty. Ethelbald, who was savagely pursued by Ceolred, had a stormy and hard youth. He was not himself a monk, but his history is connected with that of one of the most holy and popular monks of the eighth century.[295] In the course of his wanderings from province to province and from stronghold to stronghold, while flying with some devoted companions from the persecution of his pitiless enemy, he learned that a young and warlike chief called Guthlac, sprung, like himself, from the royal race of Mercia, had retired from the world to consecrate himself to study and prayer, in an island surrounded by the marshes which then covered a great district on the borders of Mercia and East Anglia. Ethelbald put himself under the guidance of a neighboring abbot, who knew the country sufficiently to find his way through the black and stagnant waters and muddy soil of these inaccessible marshes, and the two reached Croyland in a fisher's boat. In this watery retreat abode the good and pious Guthlac, and there the fugitive found a hospitable welcome and a safe shelter. He did not continue long there: when rest had given him renewed confidence, he left the refuge in which Ceolred neither could nor dared reach him, to resume his life of adventure. But new dangers led

Takes refuge with the solitary, Guthlac.

malignus invasit . . . sine pœnitentia et confessione, furibundus et cum diabolo sermocinans, et sacerdotes Dei abominans . . . ad tormenta inferni migravit." — S. Bonifacii *Epist. ad Ethelbaldum Regem Mercionum*, n. 62, ed. Giles; 17, ed. Serrar.

[295] The learned and accurate Philippe Jaffé, the last editor of the *Epistles of St. Boniface*, believes King Ethelbald to have been in his youth a pupil of St. Aldhelm. He attributes to him the letter addressed to that holy abbot, which is published with those of St. Boniface (ed. Jaffé, No. 5) and those of Aldhelm (ed. Giles, p. 100). But the letter itself seems to prove that it is the work of a young ecclesiastic, and not of a prince unacquainted, as Ethelbald must have been, with the life of the cloister. It was very probably the same student to whom Aldhelm addressed the answer, a fragment of which we have quoted above at page 534 of this volume.

him again and again to Croyland, where Guthlac always received him with the same affection, and lavished upon him, in their long and frequent conversations, the spiritual consolations and varied instruction which he needed. He had a cell beside that of Guthlac, his sole friend and consoler.[296] One day, returning from one of his dangerous journeys, during which he had found himself separated from all his followers, closely surrounded by enemies, and at the end of his strength and resources, he arrived exhausted and desperate, and threw himself into the arms of his protector and friend. "Dear child," said Guthlac, "I know all your troubles and misfortunes; I have followed your laborious career from its beginning; for this reason I have prayed God much for you, and he has granted my prayer. I announce to you in His name that you shall one day reign over your native country. You shall see the defeat of your enemies; you shall overcome them sword in hand; you shall trample them under your feet, and become the master of all their possessions. Learn only to wait: the kingdom will come to you, not by rapine and violence, but from the hand of God, when that hand shall have demolished the wicked man who now reigns, and who shall pass away like a shadow."[297] From that moment Ethelbald placed his hope in God alone, and waited with trust and patience. The prophecy was accomplished two years after: Ceolred perished in his orgies,[298] and the *Childe* was immediately recognized as king by all the Mercians.

Who predicts that he will be King of Mercia.

Guthlac; his life as an adventurer and

The hermit who with so much confidence prophesied to the future King of Mercia, sprang himself from the dynasty which reigned over the

[296] "In quadam casula . . . Guthlaci qui solus refugium et consolatio laborum ipsius erat." — *Vita S. Guthl.*, c. 39.

[297] "Est in mediterraneorum Anglorum partibus immensæ magnitudinis sacerrima palus, nunc stagnis, nunc flactris, interdum nigris vaporibus et laticibus, necnon crebris insularum nemoribus intervenientibus, et flexuosis rivigarum anfractibus . . . protenditur. . . . Arrepta piscatoria scaphula. . . . Cum huc illucque . . . in diversis nationibus jactaretur . . . usque ad præfatam insulam pervenit. . . . Alio die, deficiente virium ipsius validitudine, suorumque inter dubia pericula, postquam inanitiæ vires defecere, tandem ad colloquium sancti viri Guthlaci, ut assolebat, pervenit. . . . O mi puer, laborum tuorum non sum expers, miseriarum tuarum ab exordio vitæ non sum inscius . . . misertus calamitatis tuæ rogavi Dominum ut subveniret tibi. . . . Tribuet tibi denominationem gentis tuæ. . . . Terga eorum videbis et gladius tuus vincet adversarios tuos." — *Vita S. Guthlaci, auctore* FELICE *monacho ejus æquali*, ap. *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, sæc. iii. pars. 1, ad. ann. 714.

[298] See above, p. 583.

greater part of the Heptarchy.[299] His youth had been spent in fight and pillage, like that of all the princes and lords of his time. Excited by the recollection of the exploits of his ancestors, he dreamed only of battles and devastation, and at the head of a numerous band of friends and dependants he vanquished his enemies, sacked many towns and castles, and collected immense booty. But his companions observed with surprise that he had so much pity left as to restore to those whom he robbed a third part of their goods. He led this bandit life, which was supposed among his countrymen to be heroic, from the age of fifteen to that of twenty-four. But one night, while he camped with all his followers in a forest, his imagination suddenly presented before him the crimes, excesses, and miserable end of the kings of his race, then his own inevitable and perhaps approaching death, and the nothingness of the wealth and fame which he had sought. He felt himself as if burnt up by an internal flame — the flame of celestial desires. His decision was made on the spot. As soon as the first song of the birds announced the dawn he awoke his comrades, and told them to choose another chief, as he had just devoted himself, for his own part, to the service of Jesus Christ. Then, in spite of their remonstrances, cries, and lamentations, he instantly set out, carrying with him only a broad and short sword, such as was worn by laborers.[300] Doubtless this was to defend himself during the long and solitary journey which he had before him, for he went alone, and far from his native district and his friends, to knock at the door of one of those double monasteries, governed by abbesses, several of which already existed in England, and where the humility of the monk was so much the more tried that he was subject to a woman as superior.[301] He there assumed

as a hermit. 673-714.

[299] "Hujus viri progenies, per nobilissima illustrium regum nomina, antiqua ab origine Icles digesto ordine cucurrit." — *Vita*, c. 4. This Icles was the fifth ancestor of the terrible Penda.

[300] "Cum juvenili in pectore egregius dominandi amor fevesceret, valida priscorum heroum facta reminiscens. . . . Cum adversantium sibi urbes et villas, vicos et castella igne ferroque vastaret . . . tertiam partem agregatæ gazæ possidentibus remittebat. . . . Post tot prædas, cædes, rapinas . . . lassi quieverunt. . . . Quadam nocte . . . extemplo spiritualis flamma omnia præcordia viri incendere cœpit. . . . Antiquorum regum stirpis suæ per transacta sæcula miserabiles exitus et flagitiosum vitæ terminum contemplans . . . ecce subito . . . cum sol demoverat ortum, in quo matutinæ volucres avido forcipe pipant." — *Vita*, c. 10, 11.

[301] At Ripadun, or Repton, situated on the Trent. The name of the abbess was Elfrida. This abbey, where the kings of Mercia were buried, was

the monastic habit, having his long hair cut, according to the form of the Roman, not the Celtic, tonsure, as his biographer takes pains to tell us. There he passed two years, dedicated to the study of the Holy Scriptures, of cenobitic customs, and of liturgical music.[302] At twenty-six his soul was illuminated by a new light while reading the life of the Fathers in the desert; he determined to plunge into a deeper and more austere solitude, and it was then that he betook himself to the marshy forests of Croyland. He found there an ancient *tumulus*, already excavated by the greed of the neighboring population, who expected to find treasure there. They had dug it into a sort of pit. The fierce young Mercian prince fitted it with a penthouse of straw, made it his home, and there ended his life.

697-699.

There are various features in this life which are to be found in those of the most illustrious saints of the monastic order. Like St. Benedict, Guthlac excited by his austerities the ill-will of his brethren. With true Anglo-Saxon spirit, they reproached him specially for his unalterable resolution never to drink either beer or hydromel, nor wine, except in the communion.[303] Like St. Columba, his solitude was continually disturbed by crowds of the faithful attracted by the increasing fame of his holiness, and who surmounted all the obstacles which Nature had heaped around his island retreat to seek light, consolation, and the healing of their infirmities; he was sought by all conditions of men from all quarters, abbots and earls, rich and poor, monks and laymen; and these not only from all parts of Mercia, but from the most distant corners of England.[304]

Like the Fathers of the desert, he was exposed to a thousand temptations, a thousand diabolical visions, the most curious of which, in a historical point of view, is that which makes it apparent that the Cambrian or British marauders

destroyed by the Danes, and replaced under the Normans by a priory of regular canons.

[302] "Mysticam S. Petri apostolorum principis tonsuram accepit. . . . Sacris litteris et monasticis disciplinis eruiebatur . . . psalmis, canticis, orationibus precibusque ecclesiasticis per biennium imbutus." — *Vita*, c. 13.

[303] "Non ullius inebriantis liquoris aut alicujus libaminis haustum. . . . Hac ex causa omnibus fratribus illic cohabitantibus aspero odio habebatur." — *Vita*, c. 12.

[304] "Inter densas arundinum compages . . . abbates, fratres, comites, divites, vexati, pauperes . . . confluebant. . . . Loca spinosa sine calle agresti rura gradiendo, inruit (quidam comes exsulis Ethelbaldi) in spinulam sub incultæ telluris herbis latentem." — *Vita*, c. 24, 31.

were not afraid of crossing the whole breadth of the island to disturb their conquerors even in East Anglia. It is told that Guthlac was much comforted by discovering that the enemies by whom he had felt his cell to be surrounded and threatened all the night through, were demons and not Welsh, as he had supposed them to be by their hoarse voices and guttural accents.[305]

Like many holy monks of Celtic countries and of Merovingian Gaul, he lived in a close and touching familiarity with all living creatures, and especially with the birds who inhabited the trees and great reeds of his island. The crows served him with docility as messengers, the swallows came twittering to seat themselves on his shoulders or knees, on his head or breast; and he, on his side, built them nests with his own hands, little baskets made of rushes and bits of straw, which he placed under the thatch of his cell, and to which his gentle guests returned yearly, seeking their accustomed dwelling-places. "My father," said an astonished visitor, "how have you managed to give those daughters of solitude so much trust in you?" "Know you not," answered Guthlac, "that he who is united to God in purity of heart, sees in his turn all created things unite themselves to him? The birds of heaven, like the angels, seek those who do not seek the society of men." [306]

Like St. Romuald, he inspired the surrounding population with so much reverence for him, that speculations began to be made during his life on the price of his relics; the monk who came to him every twenty days to renew his tonsure thought seriously of using his razor to cut his throat, with the conviction that the place in which so great a saint perished would be enriched by the veneration of kings and princes.[307]

[305] "Cum Britones, infesti hostes Saxonici generis, bellis, prædis publicisque vastationibus Anglorum gentem deturbarent. . . . Quadam nocte . . . extra cellulam egressus, et erectis auribus adstans verba loquentis vulgi Britannicaque agmina tectis succedere agnoscit: nam ille . . . inter illos exsulabat, quoadusque eorum stridulentas loquelas intelligere valuit." — *Vita*, c. 20.

[306] "Velut magna lætitia avino forcipe flexuosi gutturis carmen canentes, veluti ad assuetas sedes . . . sese humeris viri Dei imposuerunt, ac deinde cantulis vocibus garrulentes. . . . Utquid incultæ solitudinis volucres. . . . Nonne legisti quia qui Deo puro spiritu copulabitur, omnia sibi in Deo conjunguntur, et qui ab hominibus cognosci denegat, agnosci a feris et frequentari ab angelis quærit?" — *Vita*, c. 25.

[307] "Quidam clericus, nomine Beccelinus. . . . Cum, ut adsolebat, post bis denos dierum cursus tonderare devenisset . . . proponens ut si ipsum

And finally, like St. Cuthbert, he had a friend, a noble and pious abbess, daughter of the King of the East Anglians, who offered to him, in testimony of their mutual affection, a leaden coffin and a shroud.[308] He accepted these presents; and although he had vowed to wear neither woollen nor linen, but to dress himself entirely in the skins of beasts, he consented, for the love of Edburga, that his body should be buried in the linen which she had woven for him.[309] He died after a week of severe suffering, but having still strength enough to rise and say mass on the day of his death, and afterwards to take the holy viaticum himself from the altar. He was still young; and during the fifteen years which he had passed in these marshes, had yet retained, in the midst of his austere solitude, that grave kindness and light-heartedness which are the inalienable inheritance of true monks and saints.[310]

His death. 11th April, 714.

On receiving news of the death of his friend, Ethelbald hastened to the body of him who so long protected his misfortune and consoled his misery. He threw himself, bathed in tears, on his knees before the coffin. "My father," he cried, "thou who hast known all my sufferings, and who hast sustained me in all dangers, as long as thou livedst I could never despair. Thanks to thee, I know how to call upon the Lord, who has saved me up to this day. But if thou forsakest me, to whom can I have recourse? who will help, who will comfort me?"

The following night, in the midst of his tears and prayers, Guthlac appeared to him, resplendent with light, to confirm his ancient prediction, and to announce the end of his trials.[311]

interimere potuisset, locum ipsius postea cum magna regum principumque venerantia habiturus foret." — *Ibid.*, c. 21.

[308] See p. 479.

[309] "Reverentissima virgo virginum Christi et sponsarum Egburga abbatissa, Aldulfi regis filia. . . . Nolui quidem juvenis ullo lineo tegmine corpus meum tegere, sed pro amore dilectæ Christi virginis, quæ hæc munera mihi mittebat." — *Ibid.*, c. 33, 35. Egburga or Edburga then governed the same Monastery of Repton from which Guthlac had issued to shut himself up in Croyland.

[310] "Ut adsolebat hilari vultu secessit; nam semper gratia eximiæ charitatis in ore ipsius et vultu fulgebat." — *Vita*, c. 25.

[311] "Pater mi, tu scis miserias meas, tu semper adjutor mei fuisti, te vivente non desperabam in angustiis. . . . Hæc proloquens, se solo sternebat, et supplex orans crebris lacrymarum fluentis totum vultum rigavit. . . . Totam cellulam immensi luminis splendore circumfulgescere vidit. . . . Noli tristari, dies enim miseriæ tuæ præterierunt. . . . Nec illum fides fefellit: ex illo enim tempore usque in hodiernum diem infulata regni ipsius felicitas per tempora consequentia de die in diem crescebat." — *Ibid.*, c. 39.

And in fact, two years after, Ethelbald succeeded to the throne of Mercia, which he occupied for forty years. The first use which he made of his power was to found a monastery at Croyland, in honor of him whom he continued to call his friend and consoler. Notwithstanding the difficulties involved in such a building, an immense abbey, richly endowed, and inhabited by a colony of monks brought from the new Abbey of Evesham,[312] rose upon the site of his cell. Ethelbald built in the midst of these stagnant waters, upon piles driven into a little heap of earth which was brought from a distance in boats, to solidify the marsh which the industry of the monks was soon to render wholesome, and transform into fertile meadows. Croyland was specially distinguished for the knowledge of its monks, and occupied for several centuries the first rank among English monasteries. The coffin of Guthlac, taken from the earth in which it was to have been buried, by the tenderness of Ethelbald, and richly decorated, formed the principal ornament of the great church, built in stone, which replaced the modest wooden oratory where Ethelbald and Guthlac had prayed together. This church, often destroyed, was always rebuilt with increased magnificence; and its great bell, known as the largest and most harmonious in England, retained to its last day the name and recollection of the hermit whom its royal founder had so much loved.[313]

Continuation and end of the reign of Ethelbald in Mercia.

It would be pleasant to believe that Ethelbald showed himself always worthy of the tender sympathy with which his holy friend had honored him in his youth. But this confidence is scarcely possible in presence of the famous and eloquent letter addressed to him by six English bishops, who were occupied during his whole reign in the work of evangelizing Germany,

[312] See, p. 439, the foundation of this abbey by Bishop Egwin, and its consecration by Wilfrid.

[313] "Sarcophagum non humo terræ condidit, immo in memoriale quod nunc ab Ethelbaldo rege miris ornamentorum structuris . . . ædificatum conspicimus. . . . Quia palustris humus lapideam molem sustinere non poterat, ingentes ex quercis palos innumeræ multitudinis homo infigi fecit, duramque terram . . . scaphis deferri et paludibus commisceri . . . ad honorem Dei et sancti anchoretæ quem valde dilexerat, pro dulci consolatione quam eo dum exsulabat multoties perceperat." — *Vita*, c. 37, 41. Some remains of the abbey church of Croyland still exist, but these are of the church built in the twelfth or fourteenth century. In the tympanum of the portal, in the western front, five medallions in bas-relief represent the principal incidents in the life of Guthlac — his arrival in the marsh of Croyland in a boat, his first interview with Ethelbald, his death, &c.

and who had at their head the great Boniface. The holy apostle of the Germans went from England to the Continent the same year in which Ethelbald became king, and two years before the end of his reign he died the death of a martyr. The letter of the bishops informs us that the private conduct of the king awakened a religious and patriotic sorrow in those noble missionaries of Anglo-Saxon faith and glory. They accuse him, according to public report, of having sought in celibacy, not Christian mortification, but the satisfaction of his sensual instincts, and in the effervescence of his passions of respecting neither the domestic hearths of his fellow-citizens, nor even the sanctuaries of virgins consecrated to God.[314] They remind him in this respect of the honor paid to chastity by their heathen ancestors, the Saxons of Germany, and the cruel penalties which were exacted for adultery. They entreat him not to dishonor his old age, not to encourage the English nation by his example to descend by debauchery to the level of the degenerate nations of Spain and the south of Europe, of whom the Saxons had already made a prey. They reproach him besides with having violated the charters and stolen the possessions of several monasteries, and with authorizing the Mercian lords, by his example, to subject the monks and priests to violence and servitude, till then unknown in Christian England.[315]

716-755.

On the other hand, these witnesses of imposing authority congratulate him highly on his charity to the poor, as well as on his zeal for the administration of justice, the protection of the weak, and the repression of local quarrels and disorders.

Other testimony informs us that he was a just, generous, and brave king; that, by his frequent and fortunate wars, the friend of Guthlac raised Mercia to a degree of power which it had never before reached, and that he was regarded as the supreme monarch of England up to the day on which, after a long and prosperous reign, he fell fighting against the

[314] "Quando aliqua injuria de statu regni vestri, vel eventu bellorum facta, aut quod majus est, de salute animæ periculosum damnum perpetratum per auditum usque ad nos pervenerit, mœrore et tristitia cruciamur. . . . Qui nobis narrant, adjiciunt quod hoc scelus maxime cum sanctimonialibus et sacratis Deo virginibus per monasteria commissum sit. Audivimus præterea quod optimates pæne omnis gentis Merciorum tuo exemplo legitimas uxores deserant, et adulteras et sanctimoniales constuprent." — S. Bonifacii *Epistolæ*, 59, ed. Jaffé.

[315] "Et dicitur quod præfecti et comites tui majorem violentiam et servitutem monachis et sacerdotibus irrogent, quam cæteri ante Christiani reges fecissent." — *Ibid.*

West Saxons, in a struggle, the picturesque and impassioned narrative of which has been enshrined by popular poetry amid the historic annals of the period.[316]

Three kings of the West Saxons abdicate to become monks or pilgrims to Rome.

The kingdom of the West Saxons, which was to inherit the power of the Mercians, as the latter had inherited that of the Northumbrians, was destined to absorb all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and thus to create that English unity which no dismemberment has ever broken up. The dynasty of the sons of Cerdic, reputed by tradition to be himself the ninth in descent from the god Odin, was to produce Egbert and the great Alfred. It prefaced these generous lives by giving three kings, one after another, to the monastic order, which already owed to it the holy and learned Abbot Aldhelm. He who opened the march in a career which was so novel to the sons of Odin, was Centwin, son of the first Christian King of Wessex,[317] who, after a brilliant and warlike reign of nine years, interspersed with battles between the Mercians and Britons, determined to end his days in one of the monasteries which he had founded and endowed.[318] After him it was the turn of Ceadwalla, the ferocious devastator of the Isle of Wight, and the kingdoms of Kent and Sussex, who remained obstinately heathen, notwithstanding the conversion of his neighbors and his country, but who, all at once, at the age of thirty, recalling to his memory the instructions which he had received when himself in exile from the great exile Wilfrid,[319] abdicated his

Centwin. 676-685.

Ceadwalla. 685-689.

[316] Henricus Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, l. iv. p. 341. The friend of Guthlac describes himself in a charter of 736, "Rex non solum Merciorum sed et omnium provinciarum quæ generali nomine Sut-Angli dicuntur;" and elsewhere, "Rex Britanniæ."

[317] Cynegils, converted and presented for baptism by his son-in-law, Oswald of Northumbria. See above, p. 284.

[318] His history is scarcely known to us, except through the verses of Aldhelm addressed to his daughter Bugga, who is perhaps the same as the abbess of that name to whom Boniface addressed several of his epistles: —

"Hoc templum Bugge pulchro molimine structum,
Nobilis erexit Centwini filia regis,
Qui prius imperium Saxonum rite regebat,
Donec præsentis contemnens culmina regni,
Divitias mundi rerumque reliquit habenas;
Plurima basilicis impendens rura novellis
Quæ nunc christicolæ servant monastica jura. . . .
Exin sacratam perrexit quærere vitam,
Dum proprium linquit Christi pro nomine regnum. . . .
Donec conversus cellam migravit in almam."
— Ed. Giles, p. 117.

[319] See above, p. 398.

crown, crossed the sea, the Alps, and Lombardy, and appeared at Rome, the first of the Anglo-Saxon kings, as Wilfrid, thirty years before, had been the first monastic pilgrim of the same race who had visited the Eternal City. He asked baptism from Pope Sergius, who conferred upon him the name of Peter, in memory of the great devotion which had brought him from so great a distance to the tomb of the prince of the apostles. Ten days later, before he had even laid aside the white robe of the catechumens, he died. The Pope gave orders that he should be buried in St. Peter's, and inscribed upon his tomb an epitaph in tolerable verse, intended to stir up the zeal of future generations by the example of the young and formidable victor, who had given up everything that he and his father had conquered or hoarded up, and abjured his barbarous religion to become the humble godson of St. Peter, and who had gone clothed with the whiteness of baptism to increase in heaven the flock of Christ.[320]

20th April, 689.

Ina, King of Wessex, 688-725.

The crown of the West Saxons passed after him to Ina, the friend of St. Aldhelm, as Ceadwalla had been the friend of Wilfrid. His long and prosperous reign laid the foundations of the future ascendency of his race over all England. Though very warlike and very fortunate in war, the conqueror of the Southern and Eastern Saxons, he owes his fame specially to the code of laws which he gave to his people, and which has been preserved in its integrity, like the laws given a century before by Ethelbert of Kent, with the help of the Roman missionaries.[321] Ina drew out his under the inspiration, and with the aid, of the two monk-bishops of Winchester and of

Legislator,

[320] "Culmen, opes, sobolem, pollentia regna, triumphos,
Exuvias, proceres, mœnia, castra, lares:
Quæque patrum virtus, et quæ congesserat ipse,
Cædival armipotens, liquit amore Dei,
Ut Petrum sedemque Petri rex cerneret hospes. . . .
Barbaricam rabiem, nomen et inde suum
Conversus convertit ovans. . . .

Urbem Romuleam vidit, templumque verendum
Aspexit, Petri mystica dona gerens.
Candidus inter oves Christi sociabilis ibit:
Corpore nam tumulum, mente superna tenet:
Commutasse magis sceptrorum insignia credas,
Quem regnum Christi promeruisse vides."
— Apud Bede, v. 7.

[321] *Dooms of Ina*, ap. Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institvtes of England*, p. 45.

London,[322] of his earls, and all the wise men (*witan*) who composed the parliament of his three kingdoms, and besides, according to his own declaration, with the help of many monks or servants of God, in order to provide for the salvation of souls and the prosperity of his people. Among these laws may be remarked some which guarantee the inviolability of marriage, and the sanctity of betrothal; consecrate the right of asylum in churches; improve the condition of the peasants, while maintaining their feudal thraldom to the soil of their lords; provide for the support of their widows and orphans; forbid the exportation of slaves, and declare free of all bondage the slave who should be compelled by his master to work on Sunday.[323]

He pursued with energy the struggle with the Britons of Wales, and finally succeeded in incorporating into his kingdom those of Cornwall, dethroning the king of that province, to whom Aldhelm had addressed his famous letter upon the Celtic Easter.[324] But Ina, who was himself born of a Celtic mother, consulting at once the precepts of Christian morality and the well-understood interests of his nation, completed the pacification of the conquered population by guaranteeing the validity of marriages contracted between Saxons and Britons, and entered into relations with the Celts of Armorica.[325] He rebuilt and endowed magnificently the national sanctuary of the Britons at Glastonbury,[326] consecrating to this work of conciliation the thirty thousand pounds of silver which he had torn, sword in hand, from the Jutes of Kent, on account of *were*, or compensation for the life of a West Saxon prince whom they had burned

Victor, and pacificator of the Britons,

[322] Hedda, the friend and predecessor of Aldhelm and Erconwald.

[323] "Ego Ine Dei gratia West-Saxonum rex, exhortatione et doctrina. . . . Heddæ episcopi mei . . . et omnium Aldermannorum meorum et seniorum et sapientum regni mei, multaque congregatione servorem Dei, sollicitus de salute animarum nostrarum et de statu regni mei, constituti rectum conjugium et justa judicia pro stabilitate et confirmatione populi mei benigna sedulitate celebrari. . . . Si servus operetur dominica die per præceptum domini sui, sit liber: si liber operetur illa die sine jussu domini sui, perdat libertatem suam." — Latin text in the Chronicle of John of Brompton, ap. Twysden, *Script. Ang.*, i. 761.

[324] See above, p. 543.

[325] Judicial tradition noticed by Lappenberg, p. 258.

[326] See vol. i. p. 657. Henschen, the learned and conscientious Bollandist, after having quoted two apocryphal charters of Ina in favor of Glastonbury, in vol. i. of February, pp. 907, 908, has acknowledged and proclaimed the falsehood of the articles in vol. ii. of April, p. 31. He adds modestly: "Si eadem, quæ nunc Aprilem absolventibus, adfuisset scientia Februarium tractantibus, explodi ista potuissent."

alive.[327] He thus testified the veneration of the Saxon conquerors for the celebrated monastery which, after having been the cradle of Celtic Christianity,[328] and the tomb of King Arthur, was about to become one of the principal centres of Anglo-Saxon monachism, and one of the burying-places of English royalty. It is the sole example in Great Britain of a religious foundation which has become equally dear and sacred to the two races — to the victors as to the vanquished.

With the help of the princes and patricians of his own country, Ina founded or enriched many other monasteries,[329] being specially guided in his good works by the most illustrious abbot in Wessex, his friend and cousin Aldhelm, whom he had drawn from the cloister of Malmesbury to make him a bishop, and whose counsels he followed with affectionate docility.[330]

The first protector of Boniface.

And, finally, thanks to Ina, at the moment when Aldhelm disappeared from the scene, one of the most illustrious of the saints whom England has given to the Church rises on our sight, the great Winefred, whose youth was spent in a monastery in Wessex, from which Ina took him to intrust him with certain delicate negotiations with the Archbishop of Canterbury.[331] This is the first appearance in history of him who was to be the victor over Teutonic heathenism, the true Christian conqueror of Germany, and whose name, Latinized into Boniface, is inscribed in ineffaceable characters in history along with those of Charles Martel and of Charlemagne.

While Ina was still in full possession of his power and popularity,[332] after thirty-seven years of a prosperous and glorious reign, his wife, Ethelburga, in whose veins, as in his own, ran the warlike blood of Cerdic, and who had shared all the cares of his life even to the point of victoriously leading his people to battle in his absence, persuaded him to give

[327] *Chron. Anglo-Sax.*, ad. ann. 687 and 694. LINGARD, *History*, p. 161.

[328] See vol. i. pp. 658 and 674.

[329] See details on the part he took in the foundation of Abingdon, given in the *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, c. 12, 13, newly published by J. Stevens in the *Rerum Britannic Scriptores*. In an assembly held in 704, he confirmed the monasteries of Wessex in their charters and possessions, by a deed signed by all the *principes, senatores, judices, et patricii*. — KEMBLE, *Cod. Diplomat.*, n. 50 and 51.

[330] "Adfuit pater Aldhelmus cujus ille præcepta audiebat humiliter suscipiebat granditer, adimplebat hilariter." — *De Regib.*, lib. i. c. 2.

[331] S. WILLEBALDI *Vita S. Bonifacii*, c. 4.

[332] "Sine alto insidiarum metu securus incanuit, sanctissimus amoris publici lenocinatur." — GUILL. MALMESB., *l. c.*

up his throne and the world. According to narratives which unfortunately are not given us by contemporaries, but which are in conformity with the characteristic conditions of Anglo-Saxon nature, the queen's device for deciding Ina to the sacrifice which she meant to make along with him, was after the following fashion: — A great banquet, accompanied by all the refinements of lordly luxury in these days, had been given in one of the royal *villas*. Next morning the princely pair set out on their journey, but after riding for an hour or two, the queen begged her husband to return whence they came. He consented, and on returning to the castle, he was struck with consternation to find the scene of the recent rejoicings not only silent and desert, but destroyed and desecrated. It was covered with ruins and filth, and the very bed on which they had slept was occupied by a sow with her litter. The astonished king looked at the queen, who had given secret orders to this effect to the steward of the villa, for an explanation. "Yes, my lord husband," said Ethelburga, "where are now our yesterday's pleasures? where are our purple hangings, our gay parasites, our heavy silver dishes and delicate meats? All has passed away like smoke, and those who prize such pleasures shall pass away like them. Behold, then, I pray you, into what misery falls this flesh which we feed so delicately; and we who are fed still more daintily than other men, shall not we fall into a still more miserable corruption?" [333]

Ina abdicates, and dies in obscurity at Rome. 726-728.

This was enough, according to the legend, to determine the king to think only for the future of his soul. Authentic history proves his abdication, which was given in the midst of a Parliament of Witan, to whom he announced his resolution to pass the rest of his days in penitence.[334] Then, accompanied by Ethelburga, he went to Rome. He arrived there after a long and painful journey, to end his life in penitence and obscurity. According to some accounts, he embraced monastic life according to the rule of St. Benedict; [335] according to others,

[333] "Villicus ex reginæ conscientia . . . in lecto ubi cubuerant porcam noviter enixam collocat. . . . Regis oculi ad mulierem rediere. Et ubi sunt, ait, domine conjux, hesterni strepitus! . . . Nonne nos qui ingurgitamur uberius, putrescemus miserius? . . . Maritum compulit in sententiam exemplo, quam multis annis frustra insusurraverat verbo." — GUILL. MALMESB., *l. c.*

[334] LINGARD, i. 162.

[335] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, t. i. Febr., p. 913. MABILLON, *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. iii. p. 465.

he preferred, for humility's sake, to remain lost in the crowds of poor pilgrims, with neither tonsure nor cowl, gaining his livelihood by the work of his hands.[236]

Upon the left bank of the Tiber, then almost desert, and not far from the Vatican, the lawgiver and king founded under the name of *Schola Saxonum*, an establishment for the orthodox education of young princes, and for the priests and clerks of his country who desired to complete their religious and literary education in the shadow of the basilica of St. Peter.[237] He added to this a church and burying-ground specially intended for his countrymen, and in which he was himself buried, for he died in Rome in the obscurity he had voluntarily sought. His faithful Ethelburga remained with him till his death, and then returning, became a nun in England.

The great Benedictine Wilfrid had set the example of these pilgrimages to Rome, which nobody had thought of before his time.[238] Some years after his death it became a kind of epidemic. During the seventh and eighth centuries Rome was the meeting-place of innumerable pilgrims, who came from all quarters of the West to see the holy city, and pray by the tombs of the saints and martyrs. By no nation was this pious duty accomplished with greater zeal and fervor than by the Anglo-Saxons. Their kings set them the example,[239] differing in that point from the Merovingians, not a single individual of whom ever crossed the Alps to go to Rome.

Crowd of Anglo-Saxon pilgrims to Rome.

An irresistible attraction to the Eternal City soon became apparent among Saxons of all ranks; princes and bishops, rich and poor, priests and laity, men and women, undertook the pilgrimage with eagerness, often going so far as to repeat

[236] Gesta. Malmesb., l. c. "Dux femina facti," adds the monastic historian, steeped, like all his fellows, in the recollections of classical antiquity.

[237] It was transformed by Innocent III. into a hospital, which has become, under the title of *S. Spiritus in sinu de Saxia*, the most celebrated in Rome. Other traditions attribute this important foundation to young Offa of Essex, who also died a monk at Rome (Richard de Cirencester, p. 228, ed. Mayor), or, again, to the powerful Offa, King of Mercia, who died in 796, and will be referred to further on. In any case, the latter was a great benefactor of the national foundation in Rome, the doors of which he opened to students of all countries. "Ut ibidem peregrini . . . ex diversis mundi partibus latibri . . . linguas quas non noverint, addiscerent." Math. Paris, in *Vitis Abbatum S. Albani*, c. 1.

[238] See p. 502.

[239] Lingard counts as many as eight kings, including, however, Ethelwulf and Canute, who belong to a later period. — *Antiquities*, i. 116.

the journey notwithstanding its difficulties and dangers.[240] They were so numerous that, collecting round the foundation of King Ina, they gave their name to an entire quarter of the city, the *Vicus Saxonum*,[241] situated in the immediate neighborhood of St. Peter's, and inhabited exclusively by them. They came, says their historian, to make acquaintance in their lifetime with the saints, by whom they hoped to be well received in heaven.

But as there were false monks who introduced even into the cloister the indolence and vices of worldly life, so there were also false pilgrims whom frivolous or guilty motives carried abroad; and the monastic writers have remarked the one as well as the other. The wandering inclination of the Teutonic races may well have contributed, after the first impulse of fervent and sincere piety, to increase the number of those indevout pilgrims who often scandalized by their conduct the Christian countries through which they travelled. Women especially, and even virgins consecrated to God, excited the just indignation of the priests and the faithful in France and Italy, by their license and lamentable downfalls, during their journeys to Rome. The melancholy revelations transmitted by the great apostle of Germany on this point to his colleague and countryman, Bishop Cuthbert of Canterbury, which led the latter to request the English assemblies and princes to forbid absolutely the pilgrimages of women and nuns to Rome, will not bear repetition.[242]

Pious devotion and indevout pilgrims.

I shall have succeeded poorly in expounding the history of these times, and ill served the truth, if the reader has not been struck by the singular mixture of good and evil, peace and war, freedom and slavery, which, from the beginning of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, shows itself in all the relations between society and the Church. It is evident that goodness

[240] "Cupiens in vicina sanctorum locorum ad tempus peregrinari in eorum familiaritas a sanctis recipi mereretur in cœlis: quod his temporibus plures de gente Anglorum, nobiles, ignobiles, laici, clerici, viri ac feminæ certatim facere studuerunt." — Beda, v. 7.

[241] From whence comes the name *Sassia*, still preserved in this part of Rome.

[242] "Aliquod levamentum turpitudinis esset, si prohibitionis stimulus et principes vestri nulleribus et vetulis feminis illud iter interdixissent, quod ad Romanum civitatem veniendo et redeundo faciunt; quia magna ex parte pereunt, pauci remanentibus integris. Perpaucæ enim sunt civitates in Longobardia, vel in Francia, vel in Gallia, in qua non sit adultera vel meretrix genetrix Anglorum: quod scandalum est et turpitudo totius Ecclesiæ." — S. Bonifacii *Epist. ad Cuthbertum archiepiscopum.*

had the advantage over evil, but that the evil was formidable, the dangers continual and flagrant, the deceivers and ill-doers more numerous than the saints. This, notwithstanding, has been called the *Golden Age* of religion in England; not without reason, if the name has been given by comparison with later periods, but wrongly if attributed solely to its real merits. The fact is, that in true history there is no golden age. All ages, without exception, are infected by the evil which proceeds from man's natural corruption. All bear witness to his incurable weakness, but at the same time all proclaim his greatness and freedom, as well as the justice and mercy of God, his Maker and Redeemer.

BOOK XIV.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF THE MONKS AMONG THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

" Record we too, with just and faithful pen,
That many hooded cenobites there are,
Who in their private cells have yet a care
Of public quiet; unambitious Men,
Counsellors for the world, of piercing ken;
Whose fervent exhortations from afar
Move Princes to their duty, peace or war;
And oft-times in the most forbidding den
Of solitude, with love of science strong,
How patiently the yoke of thought they bear. . . .
By such examples moved to unbought pains
The people work like congregated bees;
Eager to build the quiet fortresses,
Where piety, as they believe, obtains
From heaven a general blessing; timely rains
And sunshine; prosperous enterprise, and peace and equity."
WORDSWORTH.

The conversion and religious organization of England entirely the work of monks. — Their patience and perseverance; letter of Bishop Daniel to the missionary Boniface; no violence; mildness and toleration. — Their influence over the nature they had converted; evil survives, but the good outweighs it. — Alliance between the Church and secular society, without the exclusive preponderance of either. — These apostolic monks were no longer fathers of the desert, but the creators of a Church and nation. — Towns grow up around the great communities. — The monasteries give rise to cathedrals and parishes. — Propagation of the Benedictine order. — Protection assured to the monastic order by the Councils of Beccancelde and Cloveshove. — Religious instruction in the national tongue. — Musical liturgy. — Crosses in the open air. — Services rendered to education by monasteries and monastic bishops. — St. John of Beverley. — Fondness of the Anglo-Saxon students for horsemanship. — Services rendered to agriculture. — Position of the monks as landlords. — Close alliance between the monastic order and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. — Intervention in political matters. — Their place in the national councils. — Authority, composition, and powers of these councils. — The distinction between the temporal and spiritual is not forgotten. — Influence of monks in these assemblies, and through them on laws and manners. — They contribute to

the formation of that national unity which, since the ninth century, has never been disturbed. — Their devotion to the cause of the poor: expiation for the sins of the rich gives rise to public almsgiving. — Their zeal for the liberation of slaves; contest between an archbishop and an abbot for a young captive. — The rights of man as well as those of God vindicated by the monks throughout the history of their conquest of England. — Religion is too often left defenceless, but her ministers respect honor and the freedom of thought in regard to the things of God. — The monastic missionaries perfect the national character without changing it; the spirit of the Saxons still lives in modern England; modern liberty, self-government, and parliamentary rule are rooted in the Saxon times. — Conformity of monastic rules with the tone of Anglo-Saxon institutions. — Splendor and prodigality of the aristocracy. — Motives of their gifts. — Abuse of their grants of land. — *Folc-land and boc-land.* — Monastic possessions exempt from military service and from taxes. — Public danger remarked by Bede. — Repression of many abuses by the Council of Cloveshove; it decrees against monastic luxury and wealth, and against the false ideas prevalent as to almsgiving. — The monastic riches arising from the munificence of kings and nobles soon excite envy; fluctuations and oppressions noticed by St. Boniface; necessity of a limit which might be imposed by the Church herself on the increase of monastic possessions. — Their value forms a pretext for spoliation and heresy. — Lacordaire and Mabillon. — A Spanish Benedictine martyred in 1608. — Before reaching this point England becomes the home of Christian propagandism and the instructress of the Teutonic races. — At the death of Bede, Boniface is already the apostle of Germany.

I.

697. A CENTURY and a half passed between the establishment of St. Augustin at Canterbury and the
735. final erection of a second metropolitan see at York — between the first written laws of the first Christian king of Kent, and those decrees of the Council of Cloveshove which established a sort of confederation among the
747. Anglo-Saxon bishops, and at the same time sanctioned and made general[1] the parochial system, which is still the foundation of temporal and spiritual life in the country districts of England.[2]

[1] "Ut una fit omnium concordia . . . in sermone, in opere, in judicio, sine cujusquam adulatione personæ. . . . Ut licet sedibus sint divisi per diversa loca, tamen mentibus conjuncti in uno spiritu Deo deserviant." — Cap. 2. For all the details of this famous council, which was held in the presence of the Mercian King Ethelbald, the friend of the holy monk Guthlac, see the excellent narrative of Lingard, *Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 124, and Note G.

[2] Cap. 9, 10, 14. Cf. LE PLAY, *La Réforme Sociale déduite de l'Observation Comparée des Peuples Européens*, t. ii. ch. 7, § 55.

During this interval all the inhabitants of Great Britain had become Christian; and all Britons and Saxons had acknowledged the supremacy of the Holy See, substituting everywhere the observances of Rome in place of the ancient customs of Celtic Christianity.

The conversion and religious organization of England accomplished solely by monks.

This great victory was the exclusive work of the monks.

With no human aid — with at the most the protecting sympathy of a woman[3] to help them — they entered all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, one by one, as missionaries, and remained there as bishops, as pastors, as permanent preachers. Little by little they thus conquered the British soil, and covered it with their establishments. Their work had been slow and difficult. Stormy incidents and melancholy changes had not been wanting in it. Sons did not always allow themselves to be led by the example of their fathers, nor nations by that of their neighbors. Let us recall the first defection of the Jutes in Kent immediately after the death of Ethelbert, the double apostasy of the Saxons of the East, the rage of the old British Christians against the Teutonic converts, the destruction by fire and sword of the new-born Christianity in Northumbria, the horrible ravages of the heathen Penda among all his Christian neighbors!

All these difficulties and trials they met only with an unconquerable perseverance and gentleness. A hundred and fifty years after the arrival of Augustin, a holy abbot, friend of St. Aldhelm, and, like him, trained at Malmesbury, revealed the secret of their power to his illustrious countryman St. Boniface, who was then occupied in carrying the light of the Gospel from England to Germany. "To overcome," he said, "the obstinacy of heathen savages — to fertilize the stony and barren soil of their hearts — pains must be taken not to insult or irritate them, but to set our doctrines before them with unfailing moderation and gentleness, so as to make them blush at their foolish superstitions without exasperating them."[4]

To effect this conquest they

Thus armed the monks finally triumphed everywhere; and everywhere, with the free consent of

[3] Bertha the Merovingian in Kent; her daughter Ethelburga in Northumbria; the heathen bride of the holy King Oswald in Wessex; and the Christian bride of the son of Penda in Mercia.

[4] "Non quasi insultando vel irritando eos, sed placide ac magna objicere moderatione debes." — *Epist.* 15 *inter Bonifacianas*, ed. Jaffé.

used only the arms of patience and toleration.

the people, proved by the public deliberations of the national assemblies of each kingdom, where each had the freedom of giving an answer in his turn.[5] Let us repeat, to the immortal glory of the monastic conquerors of England, that neither they, their disciples, nor their protectors, used violence or persecution for the aid of evangelical truth.[6] The faith as preached by the monks was nowhere enforced by a master; nowhere was it admitted without examination and discussion; nowhere was it propagated or defended among our insular Saxons by the sanguinary means used by Charlemagne among the Saxons on the other side of the Rhine.

At a later period, it is true, in conformity with the general spirit of Christian nations, and in proportion as the ties between religion and society became closer, penal legislation often transformed itself into a helper of Christian morality and ecclesiastical discipline. The assemblies in which bishops and abbots had a place beside kings and landowners, often decreed severe or shameful penalties for apostasy,[7] for the violation of Sunday rest or the fasts of Lent,[8] and especially for drunkenness and incontinence, which were the most common vices among the Anglo-Saxons. But these penalties never went the length of torture or bloodshed, as often happened where the Byzantine laws had infected Catholic nations with its poison. Up to the present moment, thanks to God, in these distant centuries, in the midst of gross immorality, beside scandals which we have not attempted to conceal or deny, we have not met with one single bloody or cruel act which can be attributed to any Anglo-Saxon bishop, priest, or monk. Faithful to the precepts and example of their first and glorious master St. Gregory the Great, they gained hearts and governed souls by the irresistible might of kindness; and though not above the reach of human infirmity, remained long strangers and superior to the bitterness, covetousness, and violence which are too often to be met with in the his-

[5] "Habito cum sapientibus consilio, sciscitabatur singillatim ab omnibus, qualis sibi doctrina hæc . . . videretur. . . . Cæteri majores natu ac regis consiliarii." — Bede, ii. 13.

[6] We have quoted the only exception to this rule in Sussex, p. 396.

[7] The most severe penalty pronounced against apostasy was that of *healsfang*, which interpreters translate as stocks or pillory — a penalty, however, which might be evaded by the contributions of friends. — Thorpe, i. 45; Lingard, i. 112.

[8] Bede, iii. 8.

tory of the Church, and which she has always had to pay for by a loss of souls.

Such apostles found neophytes worthy of them. "No nation," says with justice Edmund Burke, the most illustrious of their descendants, "has embraced Christianity with more fervor and simplicity than the Anglo-Saxons."[9] The permanent and generous struggle, which shows itself everywhere from the moment of their conversion, between their new principles and their old instincts, their savage traditions of murder, vengeance, and debauchery, demonstrate at once the sincerity of their faith and the merit of their submission. For a long time they alternate between atrocious crimes and unbounded penances, between audacious rapine and a giving up of all earthly goods, between odious outrages upon modesty and vows of perpetual chastity. They were capable of every sin to satisfy their passions, and were not less capable of every sacrifice to expiate their excesses. But in the long run, and sometimes very speedily, goodness carried the day, and, except for some terrible backslidings which were inevitable, remained master of the field, thanks to the generous and unwearied efforts of the monastic apostles. Wherever the hand, the words, the spirit of the monk, bishop, or missionary can reach, a uniform tendency is evident, both in morals and laws, in word and deed, towards justice, humanity, the love of goodness, and neighborly charity; subduing the native fierceness of their countrymen; struggling against the most popular vices and excesses; introducing intellectual culture; creating and maintaining social peace from religious motives. The great mission which devolved upon the Church after the ruin of the Empire, that of restraining and ennobling the barbarians, of purifying and transforming their souls, was never more completely fulfilled.

And perhaps also the alliance between the two societies temporal and spiritual, between Church and State, was never more completely and happily realized. It was the climax of this union, at least in England, a moment which had its stains and miseries like everything here below, but which was free on both sides from permanent and systematic excesses. No king of the period attempted to govern or use the Church for his own advantage; no pontiff, in these exclusively monastic times, claimed that deceitful ascendency which precedes or produces decadence and rebellion.

[9] Burke, *Essay towards an Abridgment of English History*, c. iii.

They were not Fathers of the desert, but makers of a Church and nation.

Certainly the Anglo-Saxon monks, instruments of a revolution so fruitful, and creators of an organization so brilliant and lasting, had nothing, except their name, their celibate condition, their faith in Jesus Christ and His Church, in common with the Fathers of the desert, or even with the rare and austere companions of St. Benedict. Far from flying the company of other Christians, they impersonated or created Christian society around them. Far from thinking of their own salvation alone, they labored without intermission, first for the salvation of infidels, and afterwards for the maintenance of faith and morality in the new Christian communities formed by their instructions. Far from confining themselves to prayer or manual labor, they cultivated and extended with enthusiasm all the knowledge and literature possessed by the world in their days. The distant places to which they had been first led by a love of solitude changed rapidly, and as if by force of circumstances, into cathedrals, cities, towns, or rural colonies, and served as centres, schools, libraries, workshops, and citadels to the scarcely converted families, parties, and tribes. Around the monastic cathedrals and the principal communities, towns which are still in existence formed rapidly, and municipal liberties soon dawned into life among them, the vital guarantees of which still exist along with the very names of the magistrates charged with their defence and maintenance.[10]

The monasteries answer the purpose of cathedrals or parishes.

All the bishops of the Heptarchy, as our narrative must have proved, issued from monasteries; the clergy of the cathedrals were exclusively monks who lived in community with their diocesan prelate at their head. For a century at least they held the place of the secular or parochial clergy. The monasteries were centres from which missionaries went forth to the rural stations to baptize, preach, and celebrate all the ceremonies of worship, and into which they returned to revive themselves by study and prayer. Rural parishes were formed but slowly under the influence of Archbishop Theodore in the south, and of archbishop Egbert and Bede in the north. The monasteries thus long supplied in Christian England the place not only of cathedrals but of parish churches. Most of the cathedrals preserved their monastic character until long after the Norman Con-

670.

730.

[10] KEMBLE, vol. ii. pp. 330, 338.

quest. The decrees of the council of Cloveshove, in 747, are the first authentic documents which treat as a general fact the distribution of lay lands into districts administered by priests under the control of bishops, in distinction from churches situated in the lands belonging to the monasteries and served by priests under the control of their abbots. The latter churches, in which the priest was always assisted by a deacon and several clerks, were sometimes called *monasteriuncula.*

When parishes were thus organized, most of the priests placed at the head of the new divisions of the country were naturally brought from the monasteries.[11] All was to make or to make anew in that great work, for it must be repeated that every trace of ancient British Christianity had disappeared before the Saxons. Except at Glastonbury, which had been at all times one of the great centres of Celtic devotion,[12] in the little Roman church at Canterbury, where Queen Bertha was wont to pray,[13] and at Evesham where the ruins of a little British church were found in the thicket which had to be cleared away for the foundation of the new abbey,[14] no vestige of the Christianity of the Britons or Romans is to be found in the history of the conquest of England by the monks.

This extension of their office and influence had not been attained in any other Christian nation; but it did not banish from the mind of the Anglo-Saxon monks the necessity of maintaining and guaranteeing the fundamental conditions of their institution. The rule of St. Benedict, which had been brought into England along with the Gospel by the first envoys of the Benedictine pope, St. Gregory the Great, had followed step by step the progress of evangelization and Roman supremacy, and finally supplanted all the monastic regulations of Celtic countries or times. From Wilfrid to Bede, all the popular saints, Cuthbert, Egwin, Benedict Biscop, Botulph, and Aldhelm, distinguished themselves by their zeal for the Benedictine rule, although giving to it slight modifications and additions such as suited the country and age. There existed, however, no hierarchical connection among the different monasteries, no

Extension of the Benedictine order.

[11] Lingard (*Antiquities of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, vol. i. p. 457) perfectly explains all that concerns the organization of the parochial clergy. See what has been said above, p. 351.

[12] See p. 657.

[13] See p. 155.

[14] See p. 439.

chapter general, and, except the tie formed by Wilfrid between the nine or ten houses founded by himself,[15] no general congregation of different communities, such as has been so general since. The only link between the continually increasing monasteries which covered the British soil was in the code, already a thing of antiquity, which had come from Rome with the Christian faith, and which the second council of Cloveshove names simply *the Rule*, as if it had become the sole rule recognized and put in practice.[16]

The monastic order guaranteed by the councils

Most of the councils held in England from the end of the seventh century gave a place to monastic interests in their decrees which was in keeping with the preponderance of monastic prelates in the assemblies where these decrees were discussed or promulgated. Let us note the council of Beccancelde,[17] called, in 694, by Withred, King of Kent, the fifth descendant of Ethelbert, which was presided over by Archbishop Brithwald, and at which the learned Grecian, Tobie, Bishop of Rochester, many abbots, priests, lords, and *five abbesses*, were present.[18]

Of Beccancelde, 694;

The king summed up the deliberations of the assembly. "I desire," said he, "that the monasteries and churches which have been given or bequeathed for the glory of God, in the time of the faithful kings, my relatives and predecessors, may remain dedicated to Him forever. I, Withred, earthly king, moved by the celestial King, and inspired by the love of justice, have learned from our ancestors that no layman has a right to take possession of any church whatsoever, nor of anything that belongs to that church. For this reason we interdict all kings, our successors, all eorls, or other laymen, from exercising authority over churches or their possessions which I and my predecessors have given as a perpetual inheritance to Christ, to the Holy Virgin, and to the apostles. When an abbot or abbess dies, let notice be given to the archbishop, and let his successor be chosen only after the purity of his life has been acknowledged by the bishop. It

[15] See p. 447.

[16] Cap. 24. Cf. MABILLON, præf. in 1 sæcul., § 87.

[17] This is supposed to be Beckenham, or, according to Hook, Bapchild, near Sittingbourne.

[18] "Cæteris abbatibus, abbatissis, presbyteris, diaconibus, ducibus, satrapis, in unum glomeratis; pariter tractantes, anxie examinantes de statu ecclesiarum Dei vel monasteriorum intra Cantiam."— *Proœm. ms. Cantuar.*, ap. COLETTI *Concil.*, vol. viii. p. 77. We will speak of these abbesses further on.

is the king's duty to choose the eorls and ealdormen, the sheriffs and judges; but it is the office of the archbishop to rule the church of God, to elect and constitute bishops, abbots, abbesses, priests and deacons, and to confirm them by his good example." [19]

Another decree of the same council exempts the monasteries of Kent from all secular bondage, and notably from maintaining the king and lords during their journeys, which is an evidence that monastic hospitality, always so generous and spontaneous, had been cruelly abused by the greed and rapacity of powerful laymen.[20] Three years after, in a new assembly held at Berkhampstead, presided over by the same king and archbishop, and entitled a council, though many warriors occupied seats in it along with the clergy, the freedom of the Church was again guaranteed along with that of its jurisdiction, its property, and its prayers.[21] The decrees of these councils held in the kingdom of Kent, under the presidency of the metropolitan, were soon adopted over all England. They were solemnly confirmed at the first council of Cloveshove in 742 by Ethelbald, King of the Mercians, who was then the most powerful prince of the Heptarchy, and who, from his youthful friendship with the hermit Guthlac, had always been well disposed towards the monks.[22] It

Of Berkhampstead, 697;

And of Cloveshove 742.

[19] "Volo ut omnes monasteria et ecclesiæ quæ fuerint datæ et legatæ Dei in gloriam, regum fidelium meorum prædecessorum diebus . . . ita supersint Dei in honorem et firmiter remaneant in sæcula sæculorum. Cum ego Wihtredus, terrestris rex, a cœlesti Rege incitatus et spiritu justitiæ accensus, a nostris avis illud didicerim quod nullus laicus jure debet scipsum immitere in quamvis ecclesiam." — *Chron. Saxon.*, ed. Gibson, p. 48. Neither Bede nor Malmesbury mentions this council. Spelman, however, has found its decrees in five different MSS. The double report of these decrees given after his account in Coletti, vol. viii. p. 77, is much longer than that of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, but contains no essential addition.

[20] "Ex hac die donamus ecclesiis regni nostri liberas esse perpetua libertate ab omnibus difficultatibus secularis servitutis a pastu regis, principum, comitum . . . ab omni debito vel pulsione regalium tributorum. ut possint, pro nobis Deo omnipotenti hostias dignas offerre, nostraque peccata abluere immaculatis numeribus . . . nisi sua spontanea voluntate, ex largitate beneficiorum quid facere velint." — *Concilia*, vol. viii. pp. 78, 80.

[21] "Libera sit ecclesia, fruaturque suis judiciis, et redditibus seu pensionibus. Pro rege preces fiant, mandatisque ejus, non cogente necessitate, sed ex sponte obediunto." — *Concil.*, vol. viii. p. 99. This Latin is a much more recent translation of the Saxon text of the twenty-eight articles intituled *Judicia* (Dooms) of Withred.

[22] "Studiose requirentes qualiter in primordio nascentis ecclesiæ hic in Anglia jubebatur haberi honor cœnobiorum secundum normam æquitatis . . . tandem pervenit ad manus libertas ecclesiarum et institutio Withredi regis de electione et auctoritate cœnobiorum in regno Cantiæ." — *Concil.*,

was at the same time decided that the exemption from all contributions to the public treasury granted to the monks did not extend to the taxes levied for the three principal necessities of the time (*trinoda necessitas*), the preservation of roads and bridges (*brycgbote*), of national fortresses (*burghbote*), and of military expeditions (*fyrd*).

The second council of Cloveshove — which was the most important of the Anglo-Saxon assemblies of the eighth century,[23] and was called in consequence of a celebrated letter from St. Boniface to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and specially because of the severe orders of Pope Zacharius — added new guarantees and also new obligations to the already important mission of the monks, taking effectual measures against the abuses and oppressions which had been pointed out almost at the same moment by Boniface in his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and by Bede to the Archbishop of York.

II.

Religious instruction in the national language.

It is then to the monks scattered as missionaries and preachers over the country, or united in the numerous communities of episcopal cities and other great monastic centres, that must be in justice attributed the initiation of the Anglo-Saxons into the truths of religion as well as into the consoling and readily-adopted observances of Catholic worship. They were expressly commanded to teach and explain to their flocks, in the vernacular tongue, the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the sacred words which were used in the celebration of mass and the administration of baptism; to expound to them every Sunday, in English, the epistle and gospel of the day, and to preach, or, instead of preaching, to read them something useful to their souls.[24]

The zeal of the Anglo-Saxon kings[25] and people for reli-

vol. viii. p. 267. Cloveshove or *Cliff'shoo*, where these famous councils were held, is placed by the best authorities at Cliff, near Rochester, in the part of Kent between the Thames and Medway. Others suppose that these councils were held at Abingdon or Tewkesbury, which was then one of the great abbeys of Gloucestershire.

[23] See above, p. 600, note 1.

[24] "Ut symbolum fidei ac dominicam orationem, sed et sacrosancta quoque verba quæ in missæ celebratione et officio baptismi solemniter dicuntur, interpretari atque exponere posse propria lingua qui nesciant, discant." — *Concil. Clovesh.*, can. 16. Cf. Thorpe, *op. cit.*, p. 159, and Lingard, *Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 167.

[25] See p. 285.

gious instruction in their own language has been already pointed out. From this spring those homilies in Anglo-Saxon which are so often to be met with among the manuscripts in our libraries, and which are by several centuries of an earlier date than the earliest religious documents of any other modern language. Thence also came those translations of Holy Scripture which abounded in the cloisters from the seventh century, and which probably were circulated outside their boundaries, — translations ascribed by certain historians to the pens of the most illustrious monks — to Aldhelm and the Venerable Bede, who are said to have completely translated, the one the Psalter, and the other the Old and New Testaments.[25]

The Sunday rest, still more scrupulously observed in England than in any other Christian country, was, from the beginning of the monastic mission, the object of special precautions. The Penitentiary of Theodore records the most minute regulations for preserving laborers, vine-dressers, and gardeners, as well as needle-women, spinners, and washerwomen, from any infringement of that essential guarantee of freedom for both body and soul.[27]

The solemn beauty of the worship celebrated in the monastic churches was increased by the liturgical uniformity in accordance with Roman rites which had been everywhere substituted for the Celtic, and were formally decreed by the council of Cloveshove.[28] And it must have had a still greater effect upon the people, from the gradual introduction of organs, the powerful melody of which our Aldhelm had already celebrated.[29] The first mention of them in England is connected with the abbey of Malmesbury, which, being situated

[26] Lappenberg, vol. i. p. 197.

[27] "Nec viri ruralia opera exerceant, nec in vinea colenda, nec in campos arando, metundo, vel fœnum secando, vel sæpem ponendo. . . . Nec in horto laborent, nec ad placita conveniant, nec venationes exerceant. Item feminæ opera textilia non faciant, nec abluant vestimenta, nec consuant nec lanam carpere, nec linum batere (*sic*), nec vestimenta lavare, nec verveces tondere. . . . Et ad missarum solemnia ad ecclesias undique conveniant, et laudent Deum pro omnibus bonis, quæ nobis in illa die fecit." — C. 38, § 8.

[28] "Ut eamdem monasterialis psalmodiæ puritatem ubique sectentur, nihilque quod communis usus non admittit, præsumant cantare aut legere, sed tantum quod ex sacrarum scripturarum auctoritate descendit, et quod Romanæ Ecclesiæ consuetudo permittit." — *Can.* 15.

[29] "Maxima millenis auscultans organa flabris,
Mulceat auditum ventosis follibus iste,
Quamlibet auratis fulgescant cætera capsis."
— *De Laudibus Virginum*, ed. Giles, p. 138.

not far from Cambria, and founded by a Celt, might offer a new attraction by means of that touching and majestic harmony to the essentially musical Welsh.[30]

The cross planted throughout the country.

In addition to the ceremonies celebrated within the churches, which were still too distant from each other to provide for all spiritual necessities, the solicitude of the monastic missionaries had extended the worship of the cross, for the instruction and consolation of the uncultured country people. The mysterious symbol of the redemption of the human race by the sufferings of the Son of God was raised from point to point on the hillsides and in the valleys of England now ransomed from the heathen yoke. The crucifix which St. Augustin had presented for the first time to Ethelbert, on the morning after he landed on the banks of the Thames, and which the holy and pious Oswald had planted for the first time as a sign of hope and deliverance upon the soil of Northumbria on the eve of his first battle, stood in the place of an oratory and sanctuary in many districts scarcely yet cleared from the forest. A cross raised in the middle of a field was enough to satisfy the devotions of the thane, his ploughmen, and shepherds. They gathered around it for public and daily prayer,[31] and were inspired by it with a veneration not less affectionate than that which attached to the sanctuaries, daily increasing in number, which were almost all dedicated to the mother of Christ or St. Peter; for the prince of the apostles was then the saint most universally and frequently invoked by the Christians of England.[32]

Services rendered to public instruction by the monasteries.

The unrivalled benefit of the faith was not the only service which the Benedictines lavished on converted England. It is at the risk of falling into repetition and commonplace that we dwell upon the immense services they rendered, there as everywhere, if not more there than anywhere else, to public instruction and to agriculture. We flatter ourselves that we have furnished, almost at every page of these volumes, evidence of what they have done for the intellectual nourishment of England. It has been seen, that among the Anglo-

[30] Cf. Lappenberg, i. 198.

[31] "Sic mos est Saxonicæ gentis, quod in nonnullis nobilium bonorumque nominum prædiis, non ecclesiam sed Sancta Crucis signum Deo dicatum, cum magno honore almum, in alto erectum, ad commodam diurnæ orationis sedulitatem solent habere." — *Vita S. Willibaldi*, ap. Mabillon, *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, t. iv.

[32] Lingard, *op. cit.*, ii. 87–107.

Saxons, as well as among the Celts of Ireland, Caledonia, and Cambria, monasteries were the sole centres of a religious and liberal education, and that knowledge was there at once much sought, very varied, and very literary. This was not the case solely in the isolated cloisters which were devoted to monastic education. The bishops, all of whom came out of monasteries, changed the cloisters of their cathedrals into schools, and collected around them a numerous band of youths eager for work and for study.

And by the monk-bishops.

One of those public benefactors who distinguished himself the most in this respect, was John, whose name we have already met as one of the intruders who repeatedly divided between them the diocese of Wilfrid.[33] We may justly be blamed for not dwelling longer on him, so great was his popularity among the English of his own day, and until the end of the middle ages.[34] Though he was best known under the name of St. John of Beverley, from the place where he passed the last four years of his life in solitude, and which afterwards became one of the greatest monastic establishments of the north of England,[35] he was in the first place a monk at Whitby under the great Abbess Hilda, and afterwards bishop, in succession, of Hexham and York. He was a disciple of Archbishop Theodore, and it was he who had the honor of conferring the orders of deacon and priest upon the Venerable Bede. Between these two great luminaries of the Anglo-Saxon Church, he himself shone during his thirty-two years' episcopate with a pure and gentle light, thanks to his tender anxiety for all the spiritual and temporal necessities of his flock, and the supernatural help which he

John of Beverley, monk, bishop, and one of the most popular saints in England.

686-718.

[33] See p. 409, note 240, and p. 432.

[34] The banner of St. John of Beverley was placed with those of St. Wilfrid and St. Cuthbert on the sacred cart at the battle of the Standard in 1138 (see p. 445). The same banner was the oriflamme of Edward I. in one of his great expeditions. Two centuries later the popularity of the holy abbot of Beverley was renewed by the coincidence of the feast of *his translation*, celebrated in 1037 on the 25th October, falling on the day of the victory of Agincourt. Shakespeare (as also the Roman Breviary) speaks only of St. Crispin and Crispianus as patrons of that day. But in August, 1421, Henry V. gave thanks for his victory before the shrine of the Anglo-Saxon saint at Beverley.

[35] It included a monastery of Benedictines, a college of canons, and a nunnery. The church, built at first by St. John, was destroyed by the Danes, re-established by Athelstane, respected by William the Conqueror, and rebuilt magnificently in the thirteenth century. It is one of the finest monuments of English architecture.

brought to them in their sicknesses and troubles. Bede has devoted several chapters full of interest to his history. He exhibits him to us employing the most minute and affectionate pains to heal a poor young cripple, who was dumb and afflicted with scurvy, of all his infirmities, but especially of his dumbness, teaching him by the aid of heaven to speak and read, and beginning with the alphabet like the humblest of teachers.[36]

But another scene, which touches our subject more immediately, is that in which we behold him surrounded by a group of youths, some ecclesiastics, but the greater part laymen, whom the monk-bishop trained to the study of letters and music, without extinguishing in them the taste for athletic exercises, which was then, as now, inherent in the English race. These students followed their master on horseback through his pastoral visitations, and when they found themselves on level ground took advantage of the occasion to ride races with each other at the risk of breaking their heads, as happened to a young monk, afterwards Abbot of Tynemouth, who related all these details to the Venerable Bede. The joyous impetuosity of the young horsemen, their entreaties to the bishop for permission to ride their races under his eyes, the consent which was finally wrested from him under the condition that his favorite among them should remain by his side, the impossibility which this favorite experienced of resisting the impulse and example of his comrades, his wild gallop to rejoin the others, his accident, his swoon, the tender anxiety of the good prelate, the cares which he lavished on the imprudent youth, passing the entire night in prayer by his side, until the dying young man opened his eyes, and said, "I know you; you are my bishop, whom I love;" all this makes up one of the most complete and attractive pictures in the abundant stores of the great monastic historian.[37]

Monastic students and horse-racing.

[36] "Jussit ad se intrare pauperem, ingresso eo, linguam proferre ex ore ac sibi ostendere jussit. . . . *Dicito*, inquiens, *aliquod verbum, dicito Gæ.* . . . Addidit episcopus nomina litterarum: *Dicito A:* dixit ille A. *Dicito B:* dixit ille et hoc. . . . Neque ultra cessavit tota die ac nocte sequente, quantum viligare potuit . . . loqui aliquid, et arcana, suæ cogitationis ac voluntatis, quod nunquam antea potuit, aliis ostendere." — *Hist. Eccles.*, v. 2.

[37] "Cum in primævo adolescentiæ tempore in clero illius degerem legendi canendique studiis traditus . . . contigit nos iter agentes cum illo devenisse in viam planam et amplam aptamque cursui equorum: cœperuntque juvenes, maxime laici, postulare episcopum ut cursu majore equos suos invicem probare liceret. At ille primo negavit . . . sed ad ultimum multorum unanima

We must stop short here in order not to begin over again, as we should be too often tempted to do, the edifying but monotonous tale which proves the studious fervor of both masters and pupils in the monastic schools.

Services to agriculture.

But it is impossible to avoid a brief notice of what has been done by the monks in England for the improvement of agriculture. It is impossible to forget the use they made of so many vast districts, uncultivated and uninhabited, covered with forests or surrounded with marshes. Such was, it must not be forgotten, the true nature of the vast estates given to the monks, and which had thus the double advantage of offering to communities the most inaccessible retreat that could be found, and of imposing the least possible sacrifice upon the munificence of the givers. They surmounted all the difficulties which stared them in the face, of beginning the cultivation of a new country; the forests were cleared, the marshes made wholesome or dried up, the soil irrigated or drained according to the requirements of each locality; and bridges, roads, dikes, havens, and light-houses were erected wherever their possessions or influence extended, in evidence of their unwearied and watchful fervor. The half at least of broad Northumberland was lost in sandy plains and barren heaths; the half of East Anglia and a considerable part of Mercia were covered with marshes difficult of access, in the midst of which the future king, Ethelbald, found refuge with the hermit Guthlac: yet in both regions the monks substituted for these uninhabited deserts fat pasturage and abundant harvests.[38]

The latter district, the present name of which (*the Fens*) alone recalls the marshy and unwholesome nature of the original soil, became the principal theatre of the triumphs of agricultural industry performed by the monks. Medehamstede,[39] Ely, Croyland, Thorney, Ramsey, were the first battle-fields of these conquerors of nature, these monks who

intentione devictus: *Facite*, inquit, *ut vultis.* . . . Ipse diligentius obsecrans, ut et mihi certandi cum illis copia daretur. . . . Cum sæpius, spectante me et episcopo, concitatis in cursum equis reverterentur, ipse lascivio animo non me potui cohibere, sed, prohibente licet illo, ludentibus me miscui. . . . Audivi illum post tergum mihi cum gemitu dicentem: *O quam magnam væ facis mihi sic equitando.* . . . Dum fervens equus quoddam itineris concavum valentiore impetu transiliret, lapsus decidi, sensum perdidi. . . . Evenit ut . . . infracto pollice capitis quoque junctura solveretur. . . . Vomebam sanguinem. . . . At ego aperiens oculos aio: *Etiam; tu es antistes amatus.*" — BEDE, v. 6.

[38] Cf. LINGARD, i. 267.

[39] The original name of Peterborough; see p. 331.

made of themselves ploughmen, breeders and keepers of stock, and who were the true fathers of English agriculture, which, thanks to their traditions and example, has become the first agriculture in the world.

The English word *improvement*, so frequently used, and so expressive in relation to everything that concerns bodily and mental labor, seems to have been invented expressly for their use. As much might be said for another word, more ancient still, but not less used — the word *landlord*, which expresses not only the sentiment of dominion and territorial possession, but also that kind of tutelary and almost paternal solicitude which so happily combines the obligations and the rights of property. They were the best of *landlords;* such is the testimony given, by all attentive and conscientious observers of the past history of England, to the monks who were the originators of ecclesiastical property in that country, and who long remained its sole guardians. It was not only by their gifts, by their able and generous indulgence towards their direct dependants, that they exercised upon the inferior classes an influence always benevolent, and always gratefully acknowledged. It was by the effectual, enlightened, and unwearied protection which they extended to the poor and weak, who were under other laws and served other masters. "They were," according to one of the great masters of modern learning, "permanent mediators between the rich and poor, between the strong and the weak; and it must be said to their eternal honor that they understood and fulfilled in a marvellous way the duties of this noble mission. They alone had the right and the means of arresting the rough hand of power, of mitigating the just severity of the law, of showing a gleam of hope to the eye of the slave, and of finding, even in this world, a place and means of existence for all those forsaken ones whose existence was ignored by the State." [40]

Thus, then, thanks to the Anglo Saxon Benedictines, the maternal authority of the Church began to extend over all weakness and suffering. It grew visibly, interposing whenever it was necessary against all violence and tyranny.

[40] KEMBLE, *Saxons in England*, vol. ii. p. 375.

III.

Intimate connection of the monastic order with the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy.

How, then, was this office, so godlike and glorious, given, from the very beginning of Christianity in England, to the abbots, the great monks, and the bishops, who were produced by the monastic order? The influence of Christian faith and morality, of which they were the interpreters and guardians, contributed to it more than any other reason. But it would be unjust to pass over another cause, almost as effectual — the close and lasting union between the monastic order and the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy. This aristocracy, converted by the monks, promptly and cordially opened its ranks to them. History has not preserved the memory of any race which adopted, not only the belief, but the precepts and counsels of the Gospel with more enthusiasm than did the high nobility, which was composed of the dynasties and ruling families of the Heptarchy. Never and nowhere have so many men of royal or patrician race devoted themselves to the hard discipline of the cloister, to the penitential life of anchorites, to the dangers inseparable from pilgrimages and missions in countries still pagan. This aristocracy, fond of fighting, of good cheer, of all sensual pleasures, and of pomp and magnificence which, both in their own persons and in those of their descendants, became proverbial,[41] found itself all at once ripe for the noblest exploits of self-mortification, of Gospel humility, and chastity. After the first foreign masters, new apostles, issued from its own bosom, continued to show it the path of Christian virtue, marching resolutely at its head.

From thence sprang an alliance between the aristocracy and the clergy, between religion and the State, more characteristic, intimate, and cordial, as has been already said, than existed anywhere else in the Teutonic and Christian world. Anglo-Saxon princes and nobles became in rapid succession monks, abbots, and bishops; but these prelates and clergy, belonging to the sovereign races, retained, in their own country and among their neighbors, a place equal or superior to that which they occupied as laymen. They were instantly recognized or elevated to the most important rank in English society. On the other hand, this rank and those functions were often coveted by men inspired with passions

[41] "Ex pompa Anglum intelliges." — Guill. Malmesb., *Vita Aldhelm.* p. 7.

very different from the sacred fire which burned in the heart of Wilfrid, Benedict Biscop, Guthlac, and the other saints who belonged to the highest ranks of Anglo-Saxon nobility.

In England, as elsewhere, and perhaps more than elsewhere, this intimate alliance between the heads of the two forms of society, spiritual and temporal, and the constant mutual action of the one on the other, produced results dear and salutary to the Church as well as to the State. The advantage, however, was almost always greater for the State than for the Church, and indeed sometimes became dangerous and compromised the latter. Abuses there, as everywhere, inevitably followed benefits. These will be evident but too soon. At the same time, before going on to consideration of the shadows which it is impossible to deny or suppress in a sincere historic picture, let us first contemplate the light which preceded them.

Their intervention in social government and organization.

It was not certainly by any encroachment either open or concealed on the rights of others, nor by any secret or violent means, that the heads of the monastic order rose to the highest rank in the Anglo-Saxon nation. They were called to it by the natural course of things and the unanimous voice of men. Representatives of the most elevated social offices, initiated into all the necessities of elective government, of communal life, and voluntary subordination, they took their place naturally in a government based, in the first place, upon a social hierarchy consecrated by mutual service and hereditary or freely offered devotion; and in the second, upon the sovereign and permanent action of public assemblies. These envoys of Christianity brought an essentially important and much desired sanction to the usages and institutions which substituted among those noble scions of the Teutonic race the proud independence of an often heroic, but sometimes exacting and troublesome, devotion, for the abject submission of the degraded serfs of the Roman Empire.

Their place in the national assemblies.

Not only the bishops, who all belonged to the monastic order, but abbots, and often abbesses, occupied the first place in those national or provincial assemblies which have been so often referred to in this narrative, and which, under the name of Witenagemot, or assembly of wise men, were the cradle of the English Parliament; guaranteeing to the Anglo-Saxon people the benefit of a government sustained and controlled by the lay and ecclesiastical nobility, and making decisions which could not be violated or despised with impunity by any monarch.

At the period which we have now arrived at, each kingdom of the Heptarchy, and even each of the tribes comprised in or absorbed by the greatest of those kingdoms,[42] had its special assembly, an institution retained at a later period, when England was united under the sceptre of one monarch, by each *shire* or province. But there also existed assemblies more or less general, the authority of which was recognized in differing degrees by all the divisions of the conquering race. To these conferences especially, which ecclesiastical historians have honored with the name of councils, the presence of several monk-bishops, presided over by their metropolitan, a monk like themselves, had the power of giving a more august character. The council of Hertford, presided over by the Greek Theodore,[43] decreed 673. that a general synod should be held twice a year at Cloveshove. But, besides that this assembly appears to have been exclusively ecclesiastical, there is no evidence that its decree was obeyed. A century passed before England possessed one sole, permanent, and regular assembly. At the same time, from the introduction of Christianity, local or national assemblies became visible, constituting a great council of the whole country, and meeting periodically at Christmas and at Easter.

Their composition.

The monastic prelates held their seats in these assemblies, at once as the doctors and spiritual guides of the nation and as great landed proprietors, whose importance was daily increased by the extent of the new gifts which were lavished upon them, and by the increasing agricultural value of their old possessions. They sat in the first rank with the principal lords, the great chiefs of the nobility, the governors of provinces, called earls or ealdormen;[44] and above the other proprietors who, under the name of thanes, composed the greater part of the assembly. According to the theory most generally received by modern learning,[45] each thane or proprietor might reach the rank of

[42] Such as the Hwiccas, the Middle Angles in Mercia, and the Gyrwas in East Anglia.

[43] See p. 353.

[44] Whom Bede entitles *duces* or *comites*, proving their rank to be equal to that of the bishop. *Ealdor* or *elder* answers to the Latin *senior*, from whence comes *seigneur*. This ancient title, once the first in the Saxon hierarchy, the bearers of which, either hereditary or for their lifetime, were almost the equals of the king, may be recognized to-day in the name of *alderman*, which has fallen exclusively, as we have already remarked, to elective municipal officials in London and the other great cities.

[45] See TURNER, *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. iii. pp. 48, 115, 123,

earl,[46] by the choice of the king or nomination of the assembly. Every *ceorl*, or free man, whatever his origin might be, could be advanced to the rank of thane if he possessed lands of a certain extent. Every merchant who had made three journeys beyond seas rose into the same class. But no nobleman by birth could sit in the Witenagemot unless he were a landed proprietor.[47]

Whatever uncertainty may exist as to the distinctive qualifications of the two principal elements of these assemblies, it is proved that, far from forming different castes, the *eorls* and *thanes*[48] were only the first among the free men, the

130, 135, 137 (Paris edition, 1840); PALGRAVE, *Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, vol. ii. pp. 376, 385; and KEMBLE, *The Saxons in England*, vol. i. c. v.

[46] Kemble, however, believes that, like the kings, they could be taken only from certain principal families.

[47] It was necessary to possess five *hydes*, or *mansi*, for three generations, in order to be a thane, and forty to be an *eorl* or *ealdorman*. This distinction is principally founded on the evidence of a monastic historian of Ely (*Liber Eliensis*, ap. GALE, *scriptores*, vol. ii. c. 40), speaking of the brother-in-law of his abbot, who could not, for want of those forty hydes, obtain the hand of the daughter *præpotentis viri*. He adds, "Licet nobilis esset, inter proceres tunc nominari non potuit." Let us state, at the same time, that Kemble disputes the necessity of a territorial qualification for admission to the *Witan*. And let us also remember that Abbot Benedict Biscop received eight of these *mansi* or lands for an illuminated volume. The real amount of the *hyde* (in German *hof*) remains to be discovered; the opinions of the learned are cruelly diverse on this respect, varying between a minimum of 30 acres and a maximum of 120. The acre, or day's measure, meant here, as everywhere, as much land as a pair of oxen could plough in a day. Cf. ELLIS, *Introduction to Domesday Book*, and KEMBLE, *op. cit.*

[48] The meaning of the word *thane*, or *thegn*, has evidently varied like that of *fidelis*, or *leude* among the Franks, but it answers most generally to the *milites* or *barones* of later times. — PALGRAVE, vol. ii. pp. 33, 376. The members of the Anglo-Saxon Parliaments (*conventus, synodus, concilium*) received thus in public acts and in contemporary authors all sorts of different designations, of which the following are the principal: Proceres, sapientes, principes, senatores, primates, optimates, magnates, majores natu, procuratores patriæ (of this last title there are five examples in Kemble, vol. ii. 199). Many of the acts of these assemblies quoted in the *Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici*, are furnished with signatures which aid us in proving their composition. The most considerable number of signatures received in one assembly (that of Cloveshove in 825) is 121, of whom 95 were monks or clerks. A charter of 934 proves the presence at the *gemot* of the king, of —

4 Welsh princes.
2 archbishops.
17 bishops.
4 abbots.
12 dukes or ealdormen.
52 thanes.

—

91; described as "tota populi generalitate."

heads and representatives of a territorial aristocracy the ranks of which were open to all, like that which has constituted the strength, greatness, and freedom of England for so many centuries, and which, from the beginning, was a national force representing the vital strength of the people, and its interests, will, and immemorial liberties.[49] The popular element also appears and increases slowly as we advance in history. All the inhabitants of the neighborhood had a right to be present at the assemblies, which, for the most part, were held in the open air; they exercised at least the right of *conclamation*, which consisted in giving their public adherence to the decisions; they could also, according to Palgrave, make complaints and disclose their injuries.[50] Everything leads us to suppose that the crowd was swelled by a great number of monks, while their elective chiefs, bishops and abbots of the principal monasteries, took decisive part in the votes and deliberations.

Sovereignty of these assemblies.

In the temporal and spiritual government of the Anglo-Saxon nations, nothing escaped the action of these assemblies. They not only gave forth laws, they shared the actual government with the kings, and took part in all their acts, at least so far as to sanction them. No royal charter or document of state exists which does not prove at once the intervention of the assembly of wise men, and the presence of the monastic clergy in that assembly. The king could do nothing without their help or sanction.[51]

Their attributes.

No important affair was treated, no sovereign decision taken, without this help or sanction, from the nomination of a bishop to the foundation or exemption from national burdens of a new monastery.[52] The spirit of

[49] The people, says Kemble, were the true aristocracy; the nobles were only its chiefs, as the English peers are at present the born chiefs of the aristocracy of freeholders and ten-pound householders. Vol. i. p. 258.

[50] Thus, in the gift given by Duke Ethelstane to the Monastery of Abingdon, the fixing of boundaries, and the excommunication pronounced against transgressors, is confirmed in this fashion: — "Et dixit omnis populus qui ibi aderat: *Fiat, fiat. Amen.*" In Saxon, "Sy hit swa." — *Codex Diplom.*, n. 1129. A charter of Ethelred in 931 declares that the act is confirmed, "Tota plebis generalitate ovante."

[51] PALGRAVE, vol. i. pp. 634 to 643; LAPPENBERG, vol. i. p. 577. Beside the great scholars who have in our time renewed the study of English origin, ought to be named a French writer, M. Albert du Boys, who, in his *Histoire du Droit Criminel des Peuples Modernes*, has conscientiously studied and estimated English institutions and legislation, not only in his third volume, which is exclusively devoted to Anglo-Norman feudal law, but also in the previous volumes, in which he has set forth the part taken by the Anglo-Saxon clergy in the social and judicial organization of society.

[52] This is proved by the expressions of Bede: "Hæc in jus sibi heredi-

association and the habits of independence which were the foundation of Teutonic liberties, absolutely excluded all idea of social or political abdication into the hands of a master, charged, along with his principal domestics, to think, speak, and act for the nation. Every Anglo-Saxon tribe, great or small, considered itself equal to the management of its own affairs, like the powerful and unconquerable England of our own day. We have seen these assemblies possessed not only of the consultive voice, but deciding with supreme authority as to the introduction of Christianity in the different kingdoms. No public act was valid, no new law could be established, except after discussion by them. Laws were issued by their authority, conjoined to that of the king, never by the crown alone. They decided alliances and treaties of peace, as well as the election and deposition of kings; for among the Anglo-Saxons, as among the Franks, the hereditary character of royalty was by no means absolute. The national assembly chose among the members of the national dynasty the candidate who suited them best. At each election the contract between the king and the people was renewed, often with new clauses, as has been seen in modern history in the capitulations of the Emperors of Germany and the Kings of Hungary. As for the deposition of kings, the assemblies made little difficulty about it, when their government was unjust or unfortunate; and the monastic clergy, like all the other members of the body political, acquiesced without scruple.[53] With still better reason they regulated everything that concerned the imposition of taxes for the public service, the levy of troops, the use to be made of fines or confiscations suffered by those who broke the penal law, the grants of territory made from the public lands either to monasteries[54] or great captains. In short, they exercised

tarium edictis regalibus faciunt ascribi, ipsasque quoque litteras privilegiorum suorum . . . pontificum, abbatum et protestatum sæculi obtinent subscriptione confirmari." — *Epist. ad Ecgberthum.* Cf. LINGARD, vol. i. pp. 412, 413.

[53] See the deposition of Sigebert, King of Wessex, in 755, by the princes and the people of his kingdom ("Provida deliberatione et unanimo omnium consensu." — HENRI DE HUNTINGDON); and that of Beornred, King of Mercia in 757, to make room for Offa: "Convenerunt in unum omnes, tam nobiles quam ignobiles, et Offa duce . . . ipsum a regno expulerunt. . . . Quo facto unanimo omnium consensu Offam in regem, tam clerus quam populus coronarunt." — *Flores Histor.*, ap. PALGRAVE, ii. 279.

[54] All the acts of this description bear the mention: "Cum licentia et consensu procerum" or "sapientium," &c.

the functions of a supreme court, both in cases civil and criminal.[55]

No trace is to be found in the Anglo-Saxon historians of any distinction between the assemblies which treated ecclesiastical affairs and those which regulated secular life. Both were managed by the same body, and at the same sitting. It is, however, very probable that the clergy deliberated apart, at least in the first place, with the aid of the king alone,[56] reserving only a power of ratification to the general assembly. The distinction between temporal and spiritual matters was not the less clearly maintained, decrees touching doctrine or discipline made out by the bishops alone being published at the head of the acts of the national assemblies, and apart from the other decisions submitted for the sanction of public authority.[57]

Danger of encroachment in spiritual matters.

There is, however, in the history of the first centuries of the Church in England, no trace of the conflict between the two powers which afterwards became so frequent, so bitter, and prolonged. As for the encroachments of spiritual authority in temporal matters in the sphere of national life of which these assemblies were the centre, nobody was tempted to complain of, or even to perceive its existence. Yet the public of these days was much less able to appreciate the salutary and wonderful results of the influence of monastic prelates and missionaries upon the institutions and character of the Anglo-Saxons than we are. At present the most prejudiced critics are compelled to avow that the influence of the monastic clergy in the public and social life of the English was of the most benevolent and effectual character. To them must be attributed, from the time of the first laws made by the parliament of Ethelbert, under the influence of the Roman missionaries,[58] the gradual progress of humanity and justice in the national legislation, which up to that period had been too feeble to struggle against the ferocious and covetous instincts of the barbarous conquerors.

Salutary and powerful influence of the monks upon the assemblies, and consequently upon laws and morals.

To them belongs also the honor of the transformation of morals and souls which, notwithstanding

They contributed to create

[55] Bede, *passim; Chron. Angl.-Saxon.*, and Kemble, vol. ii.

[56] This is the opinion of Kemble, who believes that there were two houses, as among the Franks, one composed of laymen and the other of ecclesiastics, but both under the presidency of the king.

[57] Lingard, *Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 33.

[58] "Juxta exemplum Romanorum." — Bede, ii. 5. See p. 183.

national unity in England.

a thousand backslidings and a thousand melancholy fallings back into ancient barbarism, showed itself in the generosity and piety of the laymen, in the obedience and fervor of a clergy drawn daily in greater numbers from the bosom of the native population. To them the credit of having introduced into the laws and customs a respect for property, and, above all, for human life, no trace of which had previously existed among the savage invaders of Great Britain. To them the honor of having contributed more than any other, by the uniformity of their wise counsels and good examples, by the unity of their doctrine and discipline to introduce into the Anglo-Saxon nations a unity of legislation and of government which gradually led to national unity. They strengthened the throne by teaching and enforcing the practice of Christian virtues; they sanctioned and regulated the ancient Teutonic principles of the responsibility of kings, of their subordination to law, to their sworn faith and social contracts; they placed those principles under the safeguard of religion by the solemnity of consecration; they thus imprinted an august and sacred, and at the same time a limited and conditional, character upon the throne. In addition to this, while forearming it against the excesses and usurpations of princes and lords, they labored energetically to give to it the force and authority necessary to triumph over the dismemberment of the Heptarchy, and to create that unity, not absolute and absorbing like that which has wasted or enervated other illustrious nations, but sufficient, and in conformity with the genius and necessities of the English race, and which, when once fully established in the ninth century, has never more run the risk of attack or alteration.[59]

Their zeal for the poor. Public charity a work of expiation.

To them above all belongs the honor of having introduced into morals and the laws that solicitude for the inferior classes which is too often absent from the hearts of the powerful. The discoveries of modern erudition have established without doubt the unexpected result that the material condition of the inferior and serf population was not universally a state of hardship. Their labors were not more severe nor their wages less than those of our own days.[60] At the same time it is

[59] Palgrave, pp. 655, 656; Lappenberg, i. 203. Since the Union of the Heptarchy under Egbert of Wessex in 800, England has never been dismembered as France was repeatedly under the Carlovingians and Capets.

[60] Each serf received for himself and his family 720 loaves yearly, without counting the midday and evening meal. — Kemble, vol. i. p. 213.

impossible to doubt that the weak were often made victims of the violence and wickedness of the strong in the ancient English world, as everywhere else. How many oppressed innocents, how many violated rights, how many unknown or unpunished crimes existed in the midst of silence and isolation, in the vast regions still so sparsely inhabited? But in proportion as religion penetrated by the influence of the monks, light arose, and justice appeared. Little by little, voices which could not be stifled arose, powerful hands were elevated to protect and avenge the victims. The oppressor stopped, trembling; he had to bow, to repent, to make restitution, to expiate; and expiation almost always took the form of an act of fraternal charity, a service rendered to the community. As religious and monastic influence increased in the nation, the habit and duty of soothing suffering and remedying injustice became general. In every powerful family frequent acts of voluntary renunciation took the place of the brigandage, the robberies, and violence which had been up to that time their daily bread.

Every crime that was expiated, every penance that was accomplished by the efforts of the monks, thus contributed to public utility and happiness.[61] The long-unpunished culprits from whom the new faith wrested a tardy confession, an act of contrition or restitution, were often exempted from bodily penances, but were always constrained to pay the ransom of that exemption by acts of charity, which not only eased actual misery, but provided for the necessities of the future.

The penances imposed by the monks upon these great sinners and penitents, were not pious works and ecclesiastical foundations alone, but oftener still the deliverance of captives, the mending of a road, the rebuilding of a bridge or of cottages, the food and maintenance of peasants brought to want by intestine wars;[62] they had a thousand devices, a thousand resources, all consecrated to the same charitable and sacred end.

The abundant gifts showered upon the churches and monasteries by the fervor of new Christians, and at the same time by the remorse of opulent sinners, were thus transformed into great and permanent benefits for the suffering members of society, for the poor and homeless, the sick, the

[61] Burke, *Essay on English History*, p. 223.
[62] Lingard, *Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 258.

widows, orphans, and poor travellers who were exposed to so many dangers and trials by the rudeness of the time. By this means an unfailing channel was established by which the munificence of the rich, the strong, and the happy of this world flowed forth upon the weak, the poor, and the unfortunate. It was a great public office which, without being regulated or imposed by law, took the place of all the complications with which modern legislation has invested public charity.[63] In short, it was the realization and application of that great law of mercy and brotherly compassion which is one of the most solid and necessary foundations of human society.

Their zeal for the liberation of slaves.

Among the services rendered by the Anglo-Saxon monks to suffering humanity, none is more touching or more continual than their solicitude for those who stood on the lowest step of the social hierarchy — the slaves. The famous incident of the English captives bought in the Roman market by St. Gregory, shows us, at the beginning of this narrative, that even the sons of the conquering race were not safe from this climax of misery. But under the progressive power of the faith preached by the missionaries of Pope Gregory and their successors, the number of slaves gradually diminished.[64] Notwithstanding that the trade was forbidden by decrees and councils, a hundred times repeated, and too often evaded, it continued to be carried on as a matter of commerce,[65] but very few slaves were kept in the country itself. They did not, however, form a separate race, sprung either from the conquering Saxons or the vanquished Britons; they were recruited from the descendants of Roman slaves, from unransomed prisoners of war, and delinquents condemned to penal servitude. The monks devoted their most strenuous exertions to the still further reduction of the number. The example of the noble Wilfrid, whose first act was to free the 250 serfs who were given him by the King of the South Saxons, along with the lands intended for his episcopal monastery, proves that they were capable of seeking the freedom of their fellow-creatures at their own expense.

[63] KEMBLE, vol. ii. pp. 514–516.

[64] KEMBLE, i. 220; LAPPENBERG, i. 575; PALGRAVE, i. 29. At the end of the Anglo-Saxon period there were only 25,000 in England, according to the census in *Domesday Book*, which reckons 275,000 proprietors.

[65] It was, however, forbidden to sell them to heathens; the laws of Ethelred and Canute contain formal prohibitions in this respect.

Stern truth compels us to confess that this was not the case everywhere. The honest pen of monastic annalists has preserved the letter of a monk of royal Mercian blood, Brithwald, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, in which he insists upon the deliverance of a young slave who was held in bondage by the Abbot of Glastonbury. "Since I have failed," he writes to the Bishop of Sherborne, "in the first entreaty I addressed to him by word of mouth in your presence, I think it my duty to send you this letter from the girl's brother, and beseech you to make the abbot accept the three hundred sols which the bearer will give you for her ransom, that she may be sent back to us, to pass the rest of her life among her own people, not in the sadness of slavery, but in the joy of freedom. He will thus lose nothing of the right he has over her."[66]

This is the only example of monastic slave-holding which I have been able to discover, and fortunately the prompt and generous amendment of the evil is to be found by the side of the evil itself. If it had been otherwise, with what authority could the monks have labored for the extinction of this plague? They neglected no means besides of diminishing the number of cases in which slavery could be legalized or tolerated. The emancipation or redemption of slaves was the work of charity which they most recommended and insisted on. Thanks to their presence in the political assemblies, provisions were introduced into the laws freeing the slaves who had been overworked by their masters, or who had been obliged to work on Sunday.[67] And by their presence at the deathbed of so many penitent sinners, they were able to introduce clauses into wills which provided for the salvation

[66] "Quomodo petitio mea, qua precatus sum coram te venerabilem Beornvaldum abbatem de concedenda unius captivæ puellæ . . . redemptione, in irritum, contra quod credidi, cessit . . . obsecro ut ipse omnino obtineas a prædicto abbate, quatenus . . . tradas illam huc usque perducendam, quod possit reliquum vitæ suæ spatium cum consanguineis suis, non in servitutis tristitia, sed in libertatis transigere letitia. . . . Frater noster Beornwaldus nihil, ut æstimo, de eo quod in ea juste possedit, amittit." — *Inter Epist. S. Bonifacii*, n. 7, ed. Jaffé. It has been already seen that Archbishop Brithwald had been educated at Glastonbury before he was elected abbot of the royal monastery of Reculver. Cf. Bede, v. 8, and Hook, *Lives of the Archbishops*, vol. i. pp. 178 and 188.

[67] See specially the law made by Ina by the advice of the two archbishops, Hedda and Erconwald: "Si servus operetur dominica die per præceptum domini sui, sit liber." The council of Berkhampstead condemned to a fine of eighty pence the master who compelled his serf to work on Sunday. From thence comes the name of *Freelsday*, or day of freedom, given to Sunday. — Lingard, i. 310.

of the soul of the dying, by giving freedom to the survivors. Nothing was more frequent in the *Codex Diplomaticus* of the Anglo-Saxon period than acts of manumission, and all, or almost all, stated the religious motives which produced these acts, and the religious guarantees which sanctioned them. The freed slave was offered to God before the altar of the nearest church, and then declared free in presence of the monks and the congregation of the faithful. It was upon the fly-leaf of the book of the Gospels, or some other church-book, that the charter of affranchisement was registered.[68] The first vindications of individual freedom have thus come down to us inscribed on the margin of monastic missals, as the first indications of parliamentary government appear in the gifts given to monasteries with the sanction of assembled Witans.

These glorious and persevering apostles of the laws of God neither despised nor neglected any of the rights of men. Honor and justice, humanity and pity, knowledge and reason, were placed along with the new faith and Christian morality under the safeguard of their precepts and their unwearied watchfulness. All things fair and lovely and of good report which man has a right to love and desire, after as well as before his conversion, and more warmly still, being a Christian, than when he was not so — all the natural virtues, all the legitimate aspirations of the sons of Adam — were appreciated, claimed, and defended under the forms accessible or possible in these far-distant days, with an energy, watchfulness, and courage of which there are few examples in history, by the monastic apostles of Great Britain.

I have sought out with laborious care, and related with scrupulous truthfulness, everything that could throw light on the influence of Christianity, as preached by the monks, upon the early history of the English people. I have acknowledged that here, as everywhere else, this divine religion has been too often powerless and ineffectual amid the coarse and perverse inclinations of fallen nature. But I have met at every step the brilliant victories of self-devotion and faith, of disinterestedness and purity, of true greatness, true courage, and the most magnanimous charity. And what is still more wonderful and more consoling is the total absence, not to be met with in the same degree in the most boasted ages and circumstances, of everything which degrades or com-

[68] Kemble, *Saxons in England*, vol. i. p. 225.

promises religion in those who teach and represent it. I assert joyfully that in the lives of so many apostles and ministers of celestial verity, I have not come upon a single evidence of fanaticism, of egotism, of baseness, severity, or stupid indifference to human sufferings. The student will search in vain in the records of those forgotten lives for traces of anything narrow, sombre, or pitiless; he will find there nothing that could enslave or enervate the human heart — nothing which could wound good sense, reason, or justice — nothing which savors of that arrogant and cruel Pharisaism with which all priesthoods are attacked or threatened — nothing, in short, which does not breathe respect for the freedom of souls, and the most exquisite sense of honor in all the things of God.

IV.

They perfected the national character without changing it.

But there is yet another result for which we owe them everlasting gratitude. The monastic missionaries, while they transformed the morals and faith of the Anglo-Saxon conquerors, did nothing to change the native genius of the Teutonic race.

They made of it a nation of Christians more fervent, more liberal, more docile, and attached to the Church, more magnificent in its gifts to monasteries, more fruitful in saintly men and women,[69] than any other contemporary nation; but they deprived it of none of its public virtues, none of its bold and energetic instincts; they did not withdraw from it an atom of its manful nature, they diminished in nothing the boldness and independence which have remained up to our own day the distinguishing characteristics of the English people.

The influence of a new faith never respected more scrupulously the unity, independence, and powerful originality of the converted race, of its language, manners, institutions, its ancient laws, and its national spirit.[70]

[69] Without speaking of holy bishops, abbots, hermits, &c., twenty-three kings and sixty queens, princes, or princesses, sprung from the different Anglo-Saxon dynasties, are reckoned from the seventh to the eleventh century among the saints recognized by the Church. No other nation has ever furnished such a contingent.

[70] This is loyally acknowledged by the German Protestant Lappenberg (vol. i. 132, 144, 629), in contradiction to the superannuated tirades of Hume, Henry, Soames, and the *servum pecus* of their copyists in England and France.

Augustin and Paulinus, Wilfrid and Theodore, *emissaries of Rome*, as they have been called by certain historians, and who were in reality the most direct agents, the most immediate envoys from the Holy See which had been yet seen in Christendom, neither introduced nor attempted to introduce any essential change in the political and social institutions, so different from those of the Roman world, which the Anglo-Saxon nation had brought from the shores of Germany, or found in the smoking ruins of Great Britain. Satisfied with having deposited in these brave hearts the secrets of eternity, the rules of moral life, and strength to struggle against the corruption natural to every man born of woman, they left intact the spirit of the race, so that underneath his Christian vestment the old Teuton still stood perfect and complete.

Many times already in this narrative, following the example of many other writers, we have remarked upon the singular unchangeableness of the Anglo-Saxon character. Manners, vices, virtues, laws, customs, rights, names, titles, tastes, language, spirit, even down to its sports and violent exercises, everything that the modern world admires or fears, is attracted or repelled by, in the England of to-day;[71] all is to be found in germ or flower in the England of twelve centuries ago. No nation has been less changed by time or conquest.

All the towns and almost all the villages of modern England seem to have existed from the time of the Saxons; the names and actual boundaries of parishes, counties or *shires*, with their sub-divisions, their judicial and political machinery, their religious and civil life, all date back into the period between the seventh and tenth centuries.

But the names and external forms are far from being all that have endured — it is the soul, the glorious and manful soul, of the converted Saxon, which reveals itself in the modern Englishman. Civil virtues altogether unknown to the enslaved Christians of Rome and Byzantium, and above all, that lofty sentiment of self-respect in certain men and

[71] "The modern Englishman is already to be found in the Saxon. Each man in his own house, master of himself, erect and complete, with nothing to control or encroach upon him." — TAINE, *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*. Any who read the most faithful and complete picture I know of the political and social organization of England — that given by M. le Play in his admirable work, *La Réforme Sociale* — will be struck with the persistence of the distinctive features of British character and institutions as they appear among the Saxons.

certain classes which is the cradle of all liberty, developed themselves in the shadow of those wonders of humility, self-abnegation, charity, and piety, of which we have spoken at such length — and formed the foundation of that public spirit and those public rights which have never ceased to grow amid all the storms and eclipses. *Self-government*, that is to say, the proud independence of the free man among his fellows in the general commonwealth — and *parliamentary government*, that is, the unequal division of supreme power between the crown and the national assemblies — already existed in their essential elements. When it was needful, by a natural, though too often momentary, outburst, public freedom stepped forth, armed and invincible in the collective force of individual and local freedom. The *common law* of England, that traditional and unwritten code, "the sources of which are as unknown as those of the Nile,"[72] plunges its roots into old Saxon customs, recognized, sanctioned, and published in those assemblies which were inspired and filled up by our monks; and all charters, as well as all ulterior revolutions, have served only to define and confirm that ancient and immovable foundation of English freedom.[73]

Agreement between the monastic order and the spirit of Anglo-Saxon institutions.

To hearts thus tempered, and a race thus ruled, the monastic institution, under the form which it had adopted in England, must have been in sympathy and accord, even independently of the religion of which it was the fruit and ornament. The monasteries were types of those great existences, at once individual and collective, founded on a great moral idea, but supported by great landed property, which are still distinctive features of the social machinery of England; which have everywhere been one of the essential conditions of public freedom; and which seem as natural to the masculine and active genius of the ancient Teutonic races as they are alien to modern civilization and incompatible with Cæsarism. For this reason it was to be expected that a natural liking for monasteries, whose founders had brought from the heart of Roman slavery a system of common security, spontaneous freedom, and elective functions entirely in conformity with the instincts and habits of the Teutonic races, should have arisen among the Anglo-Saxons.

Munificence and prodigality

Hence no doubt sprang that inexhaustible munificence, that prodigality, so long displayed by the

[72] Expression used by the celebrated Lord Chief-Justice Hales.

[73] Cf. Fischel, *Die Verfassung Englands*, p. 25.

of the aristocracy.

Anglo-Saxon royalty and nobility in its relations with the monastic orders. The possessions of the Church, which then meant, almost exclusively, the possessions of monasteries, were increased daily by new foundations, or by fresh gifts added to previously existing establishments. We have already more than once pointed out the motives of these gifts, as they are expressed in the acts of the times, or as they are made evident by study of the circumstances and arrangements which accompanied them.

Motives of donations.

A profound feeling of the instability and decay of everything human, and, above all, of material wealth;[74] humble gratitude towards God, from whom every good gift is held, and to whom a portion of His own blessings are believed to be restored by improving the condition of His ministers;[75] the desire and hope of expiating the faults of a troubled life, of redeeming the backslidings of human weakness, and of making restitution of ill-gotten wealth, either by guaranteeing the livelihood of a class of men exclusively devoted to the service of God and the practice of virtue,[76] or by securing permanent help and supply for the poor, the sick, and the forsaken; in the lack of natural heirs, the hope of creating a kind of spiritual posterity, bound to pray always for the soul of their benefactor; sometimes, as in the case of the Childe Ethelbald,[77] who was an exile before he was a king, the recollection of and gratitude for benefits received, and shelter given in the monastic sanctuary; oftener still the desire of securing for themselves and their friends a burial-place protected by holy places and holy men, and which should itself protect a religious community against the ingratitude and rapacity of the future;[78] and, in short, and always, the certainty of disposing of their lands for the advantage of the most industrious, useful, and charitable of men.

[74] "Nihil intulimus in hunc mundum, veram nec auferre quid possumus: iccirco torrenis ac caducis æterna cœlestis patriæ præmia mercanda sunt. Quapropter," &c. — Charter of Aldraed, prince of the Hwiccas, in 759, ap. *Codex Diplomat. Ævi Saxonici*, vol. i. "Universa quippe quæ hic in præsentia nisibus humanis corporaliter contemplantur, nihil esse nisi vana, caduca, transitoriaque, ex sacrorum voluminum testimoniis certissime verum patet; et tamen cum istis, æternaliter sine fine mansura alta polorum regna et vigiter florentis paradisi amœnitas mercari a fidelibus queunt. Quapropter," &c. — Charter of Offa, King of Mercia, in 779, *ibid.*

[75] "Quotiens sanctis ac venerabilibus locis vestris aliquid offere videmur, vestra nobis reddimus, non nostra largimur. Quapropter," &c. — Charter of Ethelred, King of Essex, 692, 693, *ibid.*

[76] LINGARD, vol. i. p. 251.

[77] See the preceding chapter.

[78] BURKE, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

Such were the motives, legitimate and frankly confessed, which led so many Anglo-Saxon princes, lords, and rich men, to despoil themselves for the benefit of monasteries. They may be all summed up in that fine text which the Church still offers yearly to our meditation: "*Concludemus eleemosynam in sinu pauperis et ipsa exorabit pro nobis.*"[79]

Abuse of the territorial gifts.

But, as has happened everywhere and at all times, in the history of the Church as well as in that of the world, evil rose by the side of the good, and abuses came in with a strong hand under the shelter of the most salutary customs. It is undeniable that these territorial grants made to monasteries exceeded the limits of justice and reason. "*Donationes stultissimæ,*" says Bede, speaking of the gifts of the kings of Northumbria.[80] Although made and sanctioned by royal authority, in concert with that of the parliaments or Witenagemot, they at last went so far as seriously to threaten the public peace.

This will be easily understood by recollecting the nature of landed property among the Anglo-Saxons. From the Conquest, or first establishment of laws of property, besides the *hlot* or *allods*,[81] given to the first occupants, vast territories were reserved for the public service, or for future division, the life rent of which alone could be given to free men under certain conditions. This was called *folc-land*, the land of the people, and has been justly compared to the *ager publicus* of the Romans.[82] New *allods* were taken from this, on occasion, to reward or encourage new services. Thus Benedict Biscop, the young lord who afterwards became the founder of Wearmouth and Yarrow, received from the king lands suitable to his rank, which he did not hesitate to restore to the king when he became a monk.[83] These territorial grants, whether given to laymen by hereditary right, or to religious communities, could only be granted by the king with the consent of his *witan*, and in virtue of a charter or deed resembling a book — from whence came the name of *boc-land*, or land given by book. Everything which did not continue part of the folc-land was thus designated. All donations of land made to the Church —

Folc-land and boc-land.

[79] Prayer *Attende*, taken from Eccli. xxix. 15.

[80] See above, p. 562.

[81] *Lots.*

[82] Kemble, vol. i. ch. ix. p. 289.

[83] "Cum esset Oswii regis minister, et possessionem terræ suo gradui competentem, illo donante perciperet, despexit militiam cum corruptibili donativo terrestrem." — Bede, *Vita S. Bened.*, § 1, ap. Op. Min., ii. 140.

that is to say, to monasteries — were made under this name and form. Subjects could make no other gifts, as the boc-land was the only thing in their power. Kings might detach a bit of their own boc-land to make a gift of it, as Egfrid did to Benedict Biscop;[84] but the consent of the *witan* was necessary in order to transform any portion of folc-land into a hereditary and perpetual patrimony.[85]

Lands thus given to the monasteries were naturally withdrawn from those obligations relative to military service which weighed upon all landed proprietors, as is apparent from the expressions used by Bede in recording the donation made by King Oswy when he consecrated his daughter Elfleda to religious life. Besides his daughter, says the historian, he gave to the Church twelve estates of six families each, which were freed from earthly military service to furnish to the monks the means of devoting themselves to the celestial army, and praying for the eternal peace of the nation.[86]

This substitution of the spiritual combats of the celestial army for the military obligations of other Anglo-Saxon landowners was followed or accompanied by a still more important privilege conferred on the new monastic proprietors. The folc-land or public domain, when transformed into *allods* or boc-lands — that is to say, into individual property — remained subject to all the public or private burdens which weighed upon the domain, and at the same time became subject to ordinary imposts when the grant was given to laymen. But it was exempt from those burdens when given to monasteries; and when this exemption had not been duly stipulated for in the original donations, deeds were afterwards drawn out, establishing them in the possession of privileges which the pious munificence of after generations made it a duty and pleasure to confer upon the monastic churches.[87]

[84] "Ut confestim ei terram septuaginta familiarum *de suo* largitus, monasterium inibi præciperet facere." — Bede, *Hist. Abbat.*, c. 4.

[85] Lingard, vol. i. p. 250, and Note K, pp. 407–411.

[86] "Donatis insuper duodecim possessiunculis terrarum, in quibus ablato studio militiæ terrestris ad exercendam militiam cœlestem, supplicandumque pro pace gentis ejus æterna, devotioni sedulæ monachorum locus facultasque suppeteret." — Bede, iii. 24. Kemble and Lingard do not hesitate to suppose that these twelve domains were taken from the folc-land and changed into boc-land for the advantage of the new monasteries. In the Anglo-Saxon translation, attributed to King Alfred, the word *possessiuncula* is translated boc-land.

[87] The *Codex Diplomaticus* contains numberless deeds which secure the land "liberam ab omnibus terrenis difficultatibus, sive a pastu regis, princi-

It has been seen above that from the end of the seventh century a council had recognized this assumed exemption of monasteries from burdens and taxes — excepting only the three tributes or obligations from which no one was excused,[88] and which regarded the expenses of military expeditions, and the keeping up of bridges and of fortresses — as a general law.

The increasing number of monastic foundations, and the vast extent of territorial gifts lavished upon them, produced, at the end of about a century, an alarming result — the diminution of the military resources of the country. It was not, as has been said, that the nation became less warlike, or that a too exclusive regard for religious things had turned the kings and people of the Heptarchy from their public duties. But the number of proprietors bound to personal military service went on diminishing, — on one side, because of the change of lay lands into privileged monastic possessions; and on the other hand, by the many religious vocations which arose among the warlike nobility. The prince of the Anglo-Saxon monks, the illustrious Bede, was the first to point out this danger, with the frankness which was habitual to him. "In the midst of the peace and security which we enjoy," he wrote in 731, "many Northumbrians, some noble, some humble, put aside their arms, cut their hair, and hasten to enroll themselves in the monastic ranks, instead of exercising themselves in their military duties. The future will tell what good will result from this." [89]

Four years afterwards, in his famous letter to the Archbishop of York, which we have quoted at length,[90] he expresses a much more energetic disapproval. He unveils at the same time the true character of the evil; he declares without hesitation that the defence of the country is endangered by the want of soldiers, and also by the want of public lands disposable as fiefs to the nobles or veterans. Seduced by the exemption from taxes, and advantages of every kind

pis, exactoris . . . a pastu et refectione omnium accipitrum et falconum in terra Mercensium," &c.

[88] This is called in the charters "trinoda necessitas, generalis incommoditas, communis labor." See above, p. 607.

[89] "Qua arridente pace et serenitate temporum, plures in gente Northanhumbrorum, tam nobiles quam privati, se suosque liberos, depositis armis, satagunt magis, accepta tonsura, monasterialibus ascribere votis, quam bellicis exercere studiis. Quæ res quem sit habitura finem, posterior ætas videbit." — *Hist.* v. 23.

[90] See above, pp. 559–566.

with which monastic property was privileged, many of the nobles had obtained from the kings and *witan* vast grants of land in order to found monasteries upon them. Sometimes foundations were actually made, but without any monastic or even Christian charter; the donors collected around them a handful of their own vassals, or of irregular monks who had been expelled from true cloisters; they then called themselves abbots, and lived, together with their wives and children, on the land extorted from the nation, with no care but that of their household and material interest. Sometimes when the grant was obtained it was made use of without any further thought of its pretended purpose, and no pretence of a monastery, even under the ludicrous conditions just described, was made. For this reason the Venerable Bede implored the king and bishops to proceed, with the aid of the national assemblies, to the complete abolition of all these fraudulent and scandalous grants.[91]

Ten years after the death of Bede the second Council of Cloveshove [92] acknowledged the justice of the great monk's complaint, but without proposing any effectual remedy for the unfortunate state of affairs which he had pointed out.

Repression of abuses by the Council of Cloveshove.

This council enjoined the bishops to visit the monasteries, "if indeed such a name can be given to houses which the tyranny of avarice, to the scandal of the Christian religion, retains in the hands of worldly persons, invested with them not by divine ordinance, but by an invention of human presumption." [93] The object of these pastoral visits was to warn the inmates of the pretended communities of the risks run by their souls, and to provide for the presence of priests in case of any deadly sickness. But nothing indicates that vigorous measures were taken against the odious abuses which produced those so-called monasteries. Ill-considered grants of public lands, to false monks, or, as was much more frequent, to powerful laymen, continued with impunity to the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, causing serious disturbances in the development of

[91] The *Codex Diplomaticus* (No. 46) shows us how King Ina of Wessex took back the lands granted by Cissa to Abbot Hean and his sister the Abbess Cille — "Terram . . . reipublicæ restituit, nondum constructo monasterio in eo, nec ullo admodum oratorio erecto."

[92] See above, p. 607.

[93] "Monasteria, si tamen est fas ea ita nominare, quæ temporibus istis propter vim tyrannicæ quædam avaritiæ ad religionis Christianæ statum mullatenus immutari possent, id est a sæcularibus non divinæ legis ordinatione, sed humanæ adinventionis presumptione, utcumque tenetur." — Cap. 5.

the population and the condition of free men, by which the Danish and Norman invasions were facilitated.[94]

But the Council of Cloveshove had other abuses to repress besides those of secular usurpation. The illustrious Boniface, then nearly at the end of his glorious career, and whose vehement remonstrances with King Ethelbald and the primate of England had specially procured the convocation of the Council, did not content himself with stigmatizing as sacrilegious persons and homicides, the laymen, were they kings or earls, who called themselves abbots of these usurped monasteries.[95] He pointed out to the bishops their own failings, amongst others the national vice of drunkenness, from which even their episcopal dignity did not always protect the Anglo-Saxon bishops;[96] he also pointed out in the very cloisters themselves a culpable luxury and ridiculous abundance of ornament in the vestments of the monks; and represented to them that such childish trifles might be an introduction to excesses much more grave, to bad company, to the abandonment of reading and prayer, and even to debauchery, and the loss of their souls.[97]

In accordance with the advice of their illustrious countryman, the twelve bishops assembled at Cloveshove, in council with the King of Mercia and his nobles, forbade monks, and

[94] At this period there scarcely remained perhaps an acre of folc-land that had not been changed into boc-land, under various pretexts. — KEMBLE, *l. c.*

[95] "Ille autem qui laicus homo vel imperator, vel rex, vel aliquis, præfectorum vel comitum sæculari potestate fultus, sibi per violentiam rapiat monasterium de potestate episcopi, vel abbatis, vel abbatissæ, et incipiat ipsi vice abbatis regere et habere sub se monachos et pecuniam possidere, quæ fuit Christi sanguine comparata, talem hominem nominant antiqui patres raptorem et sacrilegum et homicidam pauperum et lupum diabolum intrantem in ovile Christi et maximo anathematis vinculo damnandum ante tribunal Christi." — *Epistola ad Cuthbertum*, p. 351, ed. Hussey. No. 70, ed. Jaffé.

[96] "Fertur quoque in parochiis vestris ebrietatis malum nimis adsuetum esse, ut non solum episcopi quidam non prohibeant, sed etiam ipsi nimis bibentes inebrientur, et alios porrectis poculis majoribus cogant ut inebrientur." — *Ibid.*, p. 353.

[97] "Supervacuam et Deo odibilem vestimentorum superstitionem prohibere; quia illa ornamenta vestium . . . latissimis clavis, vermium imaginibus clavata adventum Antichristi . . . præcurrunt; illius calliditate, per ministros suos introducere intra claustra monasteriorum fornicationem et luxuriam clavatorum juvenum, et fœda consortia, et tædium lectionis et orationis, et perditionem animarum." I give in these two latter notes the complete text as given by Spelman in his *Concilia*, p. 259, for the end of this letter, from the word *luxuriam*, is omitted in the editions of Serrarius and Giles. No editor has yet satisfactorily explained what were the *clavi* and *vermes*, the presence of which in the costume of the monks so scandalized Boniface.

especially nuns, to make any change in their dress, shoes, or headdress, which would assimilate their costume to that of the lay members of society.[98] The same Council forbade them to frequent the houses of secular persons, or to dwell in them;[99] it commanded the abbots and abbesses to neglect no means of preserving in their communities, and the schools attached to them, the love of study and reading, as the best preservative against the vanities and lusts of the world,[100] and to make of their monasteries an asylum for silence, study, prayer, and work.[101] It reproved and forbade the introduction of poets, minstrels, musicians, and clowns into the religious houses; the prolonged visits of secular persons, who were allowed to penetrate into and wander about the interior of the cloister; the prolonged and luxurious meals, mingled with buffooneries;[102] and especially that fatal leaning towards drunkenness, which led them not only themselves to drink to excess, but to force their lay companions to drink with them.[103]

The Council concludes this humbling enumeration of the evils which luxury and wealth had introduced into the cloister by a sort of treatise, equally marked by its eloquence and its good sense, against the false ideas which began to be general on the subject of alms, or, in other words, on the moral value of those gifts which constituted the daily increasing wealth of the monasteries. An echo of the generous protest of Bede in his letter to the Archbishop of York is to be found in it.[104] Alms, say the Fathers of the council, when joined to the appointed penance, help in obtaining from God a more prompt remission of sin, and bestowal of grace to prevent backsliding; to those who are not great sinners, it

[98] "Ut vestibus consuetis, juxta formam priorum . . . deinceps utantur; nec imitentur sæculares in vestitu crurum per fasciolas, nec per coculas in circumdatione capitis modo pallii laicorum contra morem Ecclesiæ." — Cap. 28.

[99] Cap. 29.

[100] "Ut per familias suas lectionis studium indesinenter in plurimorum pectoribus versetur . . . coerceantur et exerceantur in scholis pueri dilectionem sacræ scientiæ." — Cap. 7.

[101] "Ut sint juxta vocabulum nominis sui, honesta silentium, quietorum atque pro Deo laborantium habitacula . . . orantium, legentium, Deumque laudantium." — Cap. 20.

[102] "Non sint ludicrarum artium receptacula . . . poetarum, citharistarum, musicorum, scurrarum. . . . Non habeant sæculares quique vagandi licentiam . . . per interiora monasterii domuncula." — Cap. 20.

[103] "Ut monasteriales sive ecclesiastici ebrietatis malum non sectentur. . . . Neque alios cogant intemperanter bibere. . . . Sint convivia neque deliciis vel scurrilitatibus mixta . . . et ut . . . potationibus ebriosorum more non serviant." — Cap. 21.

[104] See above, p. 565.

answers the purpose of insuring in heaven the reward due to their innocence and charity. But alms are not given in order that those who receive them may give themselves up to excess in eating and drinking.[105] Nor can any alms which are given with the intention of purchasing greater license in the future be of any efficacy to redeem even the smallest of sins. Alms are a work of pity. He who has pity in his soul must do his alms at his own expense, and not by robbing his neighbor. To offer to God gifts stained with violence and cruelty, is to irritate instead of appeasing divine justice. For the wise man has said, "To give alms at the expense of the poor, is like killing the son in presence of his father."[106] Even to suppose that Divine justice is venal, is a means of provoking it to strike severely and promptly. The common saying, that certain persons give daily offerings to God in order that they may give themselves up to sin with impunity, is therefore a great mistake. Those who foolishly imagine that the celestial Judge will balance their gifts against their continued crimes are blind indeed. It will be of no use to them to give their goods to God, so long as they give themselves to the devil.[107]

The Council insists at length upon the necessity of incessant preaching to all, that alms can never take the place of contrition, nor of the canonical penalties imposed for the expiation of sins. It energetically condemns those who hope to acquit themselves of their penances by the intervention of others who shall fast or sing psalms on their account — that is to say, the monks supported by their gifts. It is the flesh which has sinned which ought to be punished. To allow sinners to believe the contrary would be to ruin them by corrupt adulation. For if a man could redeem his faults by money, and satisfy the justice of God by the deeds of another, then justice would indeed be venal, and the rich would be saved more easily than the poor, in defiance of the

[105] "Non sit quoque eleemosyna illius ad hoc esurienti data, ut se ipsum comessationibus ebrietatibusque illicitis supra modum ingurgitet." — Cap. 26.

[106] "Eleemosyna quæ fit ex substantia pauperum, quasi qui mactat filium in conspectu patris sui." — Eccl. xxxiv. 24.

[107] "Non ad hoc sine dubio dandæ, ut quælibet vel minima saltem peccata eo licentius cuiquam agere liceat, quo vel ipse vel alius quilibet pro eo eleemosynas faciat. . . . Ne per hoc quod venalem Dei justitiam ponat, ab eadem non solum acrius, sed citius juxta merita istius judicetur. Non sint, ut generaliter dicatur, eleemosynæ ad hoc datæ. . . . Frustra suas tantum eleemosynas et non intermixta flagitia supernum pensare judicem cæco suo libitu volunt et optant . . . sua Deo dare videntur, sed se ipsos diabolo per flagitia dare non dubitantur." — Cap. 26.

express words of Scripture. Let no man deceive himself thus, for God deceives no man; and, as has been said by His Apostle, we shall all appear on the same level before the tribunal of Christ.[108]

It is thus evident that the chiefs of the Anglo-Saxon Church, who all came from the monastic order, were the first to protest against false interpretations and evil applications of the doctrine of alms. They protested at the same moment, and before the event, against the calumnies and exaggerations heaped by an unjust and ungrateful posterity upon the avarice and greed of ecclesiastical corporations and the hypocrisies and evil influence of the cloister.

But the abuses which their watchful and paternal authority thus endeavored to assail and repress, were without one single exception to be attributed to the relaxation of rule which too much and too sudden wealth had introduced into the monasteries.

And all was not yet said. For this wealth brought with it other dangers besides that of internal laxity. It awakened universal covetousness. Sometimes the natural heirs of the lawful abbot of a monastery came after his death and violently seized the monastic lands, under pretence that the abbey had been the property of the deceased, and that they had a right to its inheritance, on the sole condition of supporting the monks.[109] Sometimes kings and princes installed themselves in a great monastery as in a place of rest and recreation, with all their surroundings, their train of officials, huntsmen, footmen, and grooms, who, along with horses, hawks, and dogs, had to be lodged, fed, and provided with vehicles, as is proved by the charters, which, while exempting certain monasteries from this charge, prove how habitual and burdensome it had become.[110] Again there were other kings still more exacting and formidable, who revoked the

[108] "Ipsa illius caro quæ illicita ac nefanda contraxit desideria, ipsam hic in præsenti punire juxta modum reatus sui debet. . . . De hoc prolixius ideo disputandum est, quia nuper quidam dives, petens reconciliationem pro magno sui facinore . . . quod superni judicis quotidie justitiam inter se quasi venalem statuere. . . . Antequam plures vestra errabunda adulatione implicantur et deducantur ad perniciem." — Cap. 27.

[109] Something of a similar character has been seen in the Irish monasteries of the family of St. Columbkill, where there were two lines of abbots, the one secular and hereditary, the other ecclesiastical and according to the rule. See p. 119.

[110] "Pastus regum et principum, ducum et præfectorum, exactorum, equorum et falconum, accipitrum et canum . . . et omnes difficultates regalis vel sæcularis servitii." — *Codex Diplom.*, n. 288.

gifts made by their predecessors, and reclaimed the lands given by them; setting forth their pretensions and the counter-plea of the monks before the Witenagemot, the decisions of which were not always in conformity with the rights of the weak. The nobles and great personages, too, often followed the example of the kings — they reclaimed the lands given to the monasteries by their fathers, or seized upon others which lay at hand, leaving traces of their depredations in the many acts which enforce restitution more or less tardy, but at the same time proving that violence and rapacity had too often the advantage over the pious munificence of former benefactors.

Sometimes the prelates themselves abused their authority by making over to their relatives a portion of the conventual patrimony. In short, the local and intestinal wars which were so frequent at this period were waged specially at the expense of the monastic lands,[111] which were always the best cultivated and the most populous, and consequently offered a richer and more attractive prey to the spoiler. This fact explains the singular fluctuations of prosperity to which the monasteries were subject, though their perseverance, their laborious and economical system, their paternal care of the agricultural population, were almost always sufficient to restore their impaired fortunes. The twice-repeated accusation of St. Boniface, when, in his letters to King Ethelbald and the Archbishop of Canterbury, he distinguishes England as the country in which the monks were subjected to the harshest bondage, on account of the exactions and forced labor required from them by the royal officials for public buildings, is much less comprehensible. He speaks of these oppressions as of a novelty unknown under the ancient kings, and in the other countries of Christendom; no trace of them is to be found in contemporary documents; but the evidence of the great Boniface, so attentive an observer of everything that concerned the Church in his native country, is too grave to be set altogether aside.[112]

[111] All these causes of the ruin or deterioration of monastic property are well explained by Lingard, *Antiquities*, vol. i. pp. 226 and 253–256.

[112] "Dicitur quod præfecti et comites tui majorem violentiam et servitutem monachis et sacerdotibus irrogent, quam cæteri ante Christiani reges fecissent." — *Epist. ad Ethelbaldum*, No. 59. "De violenta quoque monachorum servitute, operibus et ædificiis regalibus, quæ in toto mundo Christianorum non auditur facta, nisi tantum in genere Anglorum: quod sacerdotibus Dei non tacendum nec consentiendum est, quod inauditum malum est præteritis seculis." — *Epist. ad Cuthbertum*, No. 70, ed. Jaffé.

Property has been in England, as elsewhere, the condition and guarantee of freedom for the Church as well as for corporations and individuals. But the burdens, the abuses, the excesses, the privileges which property brings with it, have been in England more than anywhere else, and at all periods, the great danger of the Church, and it is upon this rock that the monastic ark has perished, drawing with it in its shipwreck the whole Catholic Church of England. In this lies a terrible mystery, a problem of which our fathers did not sufficiently understand the gravity and difficulty. To solve it would have demanded from the heads of the Church, and especially of the religious orders, an amount of discernment, moderation, and prudence easier to dream of than to find. But the reaction which raised up the holy founders of mendicant orders, and which always burns in some souls, enamoured of the primitive but transitory simplicity of the great cenobitical foundations, is but too easily imaginable. "My brethren," said the greatest monk of our century, preaching at the inauguration of one of his new establishments — "my brethren, if I knew that our house would grow rich, even by your savings, I should rise to-night and set fire to it, at its four corners."

V.

Fatal wealth! let us repeat with this great man — fatal wealth, the daughter of charity, of faith, of a generous and spontaneous virtue, but the mother of covetousness, envy, robbery, and ruin! Scarcely a century had run since the modest and sober beginning of the Church and monastic order in England — and already the honorable and undisputed voices of saints, such as Boniface and Bede, are raised to indicate the danger, though without perceiving its cause. The leprosy was already there. In the fulness of youth, at the height of health, the germ of mortality appeared. The day was to come when the poisonous fruit should be gathered by greedy and bloody hands. The day was to come when a monster, who resembled at once Caligula and Heliogabalus, a Henry VIII., with his cowardly courtiers and debased people, should arm himself with the pretext of the exorbitant wealth of religious corporations in order to annihilate, and drown in blood and slavery, the work of Augustin, Wilfrid, and Bede.

I think I have a right to despise the insinuations of those

who have dared to accuse me of desiring to absolve or mitigate the crime of those sacrilegious bandits — those cowardly spoilers who, in England as in all the rest of Europe, have made a prey of the patrimony of the Church. But who will not regret with me that the Church, which alone had the necessary discernment and authority, should not herself have set limits, at a suitable moment, to the unlimited increase of wealth in the monastic corporations? The increase was lawful, natural, often even involuntary, but dangerous and exorbitant. The Church could and ought to have understood this. The Church, with her supernatural insight, her divine authority, her maternal omnipotence, could and ought to have forestalled the danger by warning prohibitions, by a just division of the superfluities of great orders and rich communities, either to the advantage of the poor, of public beneficence, of the inferior and neglected clergy, or any other social service or necessity.

No man can say from what evils and crimes the world might have been spared if the Church, which was destined to be the chief victim, had been beforehand with the spoilers; had baffled their hatred and disarmed their treachery by taking from them this specious pretext; arresting with a prudent and steady hand the rising tide of ecclesiastical wealth, and saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."[113]

Disinterestedness is, above all others, the virtue of a priest; voluntary poverty has always been the unfailing source of the influence and power of monks. In this they have always been able — they will always be able — to renew and revive their strength. It was this thought that comforted the great soul of Mabillon, the most illustrious of modern Benedictines, in those generous lamentations which dropped from his pen after the narrative of the conquest of England by the monks, and which may still be applied to so many other Catholic countries which the scythe of Vandalism had not yet assailed in his day:—

"Ah! if Gregory or Augustin could but live again, and see these lands to-day! What a sad glance would they throw upon the fruits of their wasted labors, the scattered stones of the sanctuary, the house of prayer changed into the abode of desolation! It is not that we weep the lost wealth of the Church; it is not our sacked and overthrown

[113] Job xxxviii. 11.

monasteries that the Benedictines regret. No; but we groan over the fate of our brethren, rent from the bosom of the Catholic Church and rooted in heresy. God grant that we might buy their return by the price of all that might once have been ours. What would not the Church give, what would not our order sacrifice, to gain the souls of our brethren, and enrich ourselves in the poverty of Christ!" [114]

It was from the Benedictine ranks, purified by toil and a frugal life, or from the bosom of other orders given by God to the Church to defend and console her, that the new missionaries came who, in the age of Mabillon, returned upon English soil, a thousand years after the companions of Augustin and the disciples of Columba. Far from being received, as their predecessors had been by the Anglo-Saxon pagans, with magnanimous and intelligent tolerance, they had nothing to expect of the Protestant English but martyrdom, often preceded by the horrors of a lengthened captivity, and by tortures unknown to savages. Nevertheless, daily some monk crossed the sea, and landed disguised and by night upon the soil where Augustin and the monks of Mont Cœlius had planted in broad day the cross of Jesus Christ, now banished and denied by Christian England. Not far from the old wasted and confiscated monasteries, he began, at the risk of his life, the clandestine practice of that worship which the envoys of Gregory the Great had openly celebrated; he distributed the bread of life and truth to some sheep of the little flock which had survived persecutions more atrocious and prolonged than those of Decius or Diocletian, to keep and transmit to our free and happier days the yet warm ashes of the truth. They came from France, they came from Belgium, Italy, and even from Spain, to gather these bloody laurels, striving for them with exiles of the English race. They were discovered, questioned, tortured, and then murdered, with all the refinements of infernal cruelty. Among many others, let us name a Spaniard, George

A Spanish Benedictine martyred by

[114] "Ah! si modo in illas terras redivivi venirent Gregorius et Augustinus! quibus oculis intuerentur laborum suorum fructus dissipatos, dispersos lapides sanctuarii, et domos orationis factas domos desolationis! Neque vero lugemus amissas illic Ecclesiæ amplissimas opes . . . neque nos Benedictini jam dolemus monasteria nostra direpta et eversa; sed ingemiscimus, quod fratres nostros a gremio Ecclesiæ Catholicæ avulsos et in schismate obfirmatos videamus. Utinam cessione omnium rerum, olim nostrarum, eos ad nos redituros comparare nobis liceret! Quidni Ecclesia, quidni ordo noster ultro cederet bonis, olim suis, ad lucrandos fratres, cum Christus propter nos egenus factus sit, ut nos ejus inopia ditaremur!" — *Ann. Bened.*, l. ix. c. 44.

Gervaise, who, captured and questioned by the judges of Mary Stuart's miserable son upon his profession, answered, "I am a Benedictine monk, of that order which of old converted England to the Christian faith." He renewed this profession at the foot of the gibbet on which he was hung, and from which he was taken down before he had yielded his last breath that his side might be opened, his heart torn out, and his feet cut off, in order to teach foreign monks who should venture to intrude on English soil, what sufferings should prevent their return to their native country.[115] "But," says the Spanish Benedictine who has added this tale to the glorious annals of his order, "what heart among us does not feel itself inspired by this example to suffer for Christ, and to repeat the sacred text, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those who carry good tidings, who publish peace.' Besides," continues the Castilian annalist, "if there is any undertaking which belongs above others to the order of St. Benedict, it is the mission to England, for our fathers conquered that island to Christ by their preaching and by their blood. They possessed there a crowd of monasteries, illustrious among the most illustrious in Europe. When generals and captains in arms desire to animate their soldiers for the battle, they remind them of their past exploits, of their victories, of the glory of their nation, the safety and honor of their wives and children. It seems to me that our father Benedict, from the height of heaven, speaks thus to his monks. He reminds them that England was brought within the pale of the Church by St. Gregory and the monk-apostles of that island. He commands the monks of all his congregations to return there for the honor of religion, that the faith planted by the hands of his sons may not be brought to nothing; not to forget how many souls sigh after religious life; and to carry help to our mother, the holy Church, so cruelly persecuted by heresy."[116] the English in 1608.

But let us turn our saddened eyes away from that terrible future, so different, and still so distant, from the time of which we have just spoken. Notwithstanding the dangers

[115] "Como amenaçando a los monges de España que no passen a aquella isla; por que ellos padeceran los mismos tormentos y no tendran pies para bolver a su tierra." — YEPES, *Coronica General de S Benito*, 1609, vol. i. p. 448.

[116] YEPES, *l. c.*

and abuses which, in the interests of truth, must be acknowledged to have existed from the beginning of monastic missions, long centuries of faith and fervor, of union with the Roman Church and Catholic Christendom, succeeded the beautiful beginning of converted England. Abundant harvests were produced during these centuries in the furrows ploughed by the disciples of Augustin and Bede. Before it settled into the great nation which the world admires and envies, furnished with the noblest and wisest institutions that men have ever known, with a literature rich in unrivalled genius, and power greater than that of ancient Rome, England had to become the great base of operation for the spiritual conquests of the Papacy, the great centre of Christian missions. By her the Roman Church moved, enlightened, and subdued the centre and north of Europe; and it was by her means that the German and Scandinavian peoples, still plunged in the darkness of heathenism, were brought into the Christian faith.

The first-fruits of the monastic seed sown by the hand of the great monk Gregory in the bosom of the Anglo-Saxon race, was the great apostle and martyr Winifred, whose Latin name, *Bonifacius*, the benefactor, so exactly expressed his glorious career. It was he who was chosen by God to carry the light of truth, the flame of love, the spirit of martyrdom, into the cradle of his ancestors, the depths of those German forests, happily impenetrable by the enslaved Romans, from whence came the freedom, thought, and life of Catholic nations, and with these the Christian civilization of two worlds.

BOOK XV.

THE ANGLO-SAXON NUNS.

"Quali colombe dal disio chiamate
Con l' ali aperte e ferme al dolce nido
Volan, per l' aer dal voler portate."
DANTE, *Inferno*, c. 5.

"Indi, come orologio che ne chiami
Nell' ora che la sposa di Dio surge
A mattinar lo sposo, perchè l' ami,
Che l' una parte e l' altra tira ed urge
Tin tin sonando con sì dolce nota
Che 'l ben disposto spirto d' amor turge;
Così vid' io la gloriosa ruota
Muoversi e render voce a voce in tempra
Ed in dolezza ch' esser non può nota
Se non colà dove 'l gioir s' insempra."
Paradiso, c. 10.

"Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure."
MILTON, *Penseroso*.

I.

Convents of women as numerous and important as the monasteries of men. — Important position of women among the Teutonic races. — Contrast with the Romans of the Empire. — Among the Anglo-Saxons, descendants of the Cimbri, the influence of women even greater and happier than in other nations. — Importance of dynastic alliances. — Anglo-Saxon queens.

The Teutonic barbarians, though less corrupt than the Romans, nevertheless required an immense effort of the Christian apostles to conquer their sensual excesses. — The debt owed by women to Christianity. — The Church could only emancipate women by the ideal of Christian virginity. — This virginity nowhere more honored than among the Anglo-Saxons. — Influence and authority of abbesses. They appear in the national councils. — Ceremonial of the solemn benediction of a nun.

II.

Anglo-Saxon queens and princesses in the cloister. — The first nuns trained in France, at Faremoutier, Jouarre, and Chelles. — Saint Botulph and the two East Anglian princesses at Chelles.

Each dynasty of the Heptarchy supplies its share of virgins, wives, and widows.

The Northumbrian nuns already well known, except Bega. — Legend of this princess, an Irishwoman by birth. — Perpetual confusion of history and tradition.

The *Ascings*, or princesses of the Kentish dynasty. — Ethelburga, Queen of Northumbria, afterwards foundress of Lyminge. — Her sister Eadburga, and her niece Eanswida, foundress of Folkestone. — The legend of Domneva and her brothers. — The hind's run in the Isle of Thanet. — Great popularity of St. Mildred. — Legend of the box on the ear. — Mildred's sisters. — Milburga and the dead child.

The Mercian princesses. — The race of the cruel Penda furnished the greatest number of saints and nuns. — Three of his daughters nuns, and four of his granddaughters saints.

The *Uffings* of East Anglia. — The three daughters of King Anna who fell in battle. — Withburga and her community fed on hind's milk. — Three generations of saints of the race of Odin at Ely, which had for its three first abbesses a Queen of Northumbria, a Queen of Kent, and a Queen of Mercia. — Wereburga, the fourth sainted Abbess of Ely, and the shepherd of Weedon.

Nuns of the race of Cerdic in Wessex; the wife and sisters of King Ina. — St. Cuthburga, foundress of Winbourne. — The monastery of Frideswida, a West Saxon princess, is the cradle of the University of Oxford: the kiss of the leper.

III.

Literary, biblical, and classical studies among the Anglo-Saxon nuns — chiefly at Barking, under Abbess Hildelida. St. Aldhelm addresses to them his *Eulogy of Virginity;* his letters to other nuns. — Winbourne, another centre of intellectual activity. — Abbess Tetta and her five hundred nuns; the novices dance on the tomb of their mistress.

IV.

Winbourne, a double monastery. — Origin of these singular institutions. — They flourished chiefly in the Irish colonies in Gaul; from thence introduced into England. — A monastery of men joined to every great abbey of women, and always governed by the abbess. — Interdicted by Archbishop Theodore. — The double monasteries disappeared after the Danish invasion; resemblance to the boys' schools managed by young girls in the United States. — In the seventh and eighth centuries no disorders are remarked in them except at Coldingham. — What were the abuses of the Anglo-Saxon cloisters. — Splendor of dress; attempts upon the modesty of the nuns foreseen and punished by Anglo-Saxon legislation. — Decrees of Archbishop Theodore and Egbert against the criminal relations of the clergy with nuns; their importance should not be exaggerated.

V.

The letters of St. Boniface contain the surest accounts of the state of souls in the Anglo-Saxon cloisters. — All there was not calm and happiness. — Tender and impassioned character of the letters addressed by the nuns to Boniface and his companions. — The not less affectionate answers of the missionaries. — The three Buggas and the two Eadburgas. — Earnest desire to make pilgrimages to Rome. — Grievances of the Abbess Eangytha and her daughter. — How St. Lioba became connected with St. Boniface. — Other letters written to the saint by his friends: Cena, Egburga. — Lamentation of a nun for the absence of her brother.

VI.

Excesses of feeling vanish before death, but death itself does not put an end to the sweet friendships of the cloister. — St. Galla. — Hilda and her friend; Ethelburga and her friend; the daughters of Earl Puch. — Visions of light. — The daughter of the King of Kent and the lay sister at Faremoutier. — The shining shroud at Barking; the extinguished lamp.

VII.

History has preserved only these names, but many others have disappeared after glorifying the Church and their country. — Masculine character of these Anglo-Saxon nuns: their monastic ideal unites the types of man, woman, and child.

Conclusion. — The whole ancient Catholic world has perished except the army of sacrifice. — Number and endurance of contemporary vocations.

I.

"Hark how I'll bribe you: . . .
Ay, with such gifts that heaven shall share with you;
. . . With true prayers
That shall be up at heaven and enter there
Ere sunrise — prayers from preserved souls,
From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal."

SHAKESPEARE, *Measure for Measure.*

I HAD supposed my task at an end; but I hear the sound as of a choir of sweet and pure voices which seem to reproach me for having left in the shade one side of the great edifice which I have undertaken to reconstruct in thought. These voices have no plaintive sound. But they are full of a soft and overpowering harmony which has not been sufficiently celebrated before men. The souls whose sentiments they utter do not complain of being forgotten; it is their chosen condition and desire. They have made greater sacrifices than that of a place in the memory of men. Strength, veiled

by gentleness, is in their very breath. Their appearance in history is characterized by something clear and firm, sober yet animated, as well as by that sacrifice of life in its flower, which is of all things in the world the most touching. These are the daughters of the Anglo-Saxon kings and lords, and with them, a true nation of virgins, voluntary prisoners of the love of God,[1] and consecrated to monastic life in cloisters which rival in number and influence the monasteries of men, the most important centres of Christian life.

We have already seen how, outside their communities, and mingled in the current of the historical events of their time, several of those vigorous women, those wise virgins and spiritual warriors, have left their trace in the history of their country. But such isolated figures do not suffice for an attentive study of the state of souls and things in times so distant. Account must be made of other personages of the same order, and above all as much as is possible of the feminine army which is arrayed by the side of those queens and princesses. The crowd must be penetrated in any attempt to trace this fruitful and powerful branch of the monastic family, and in default of exact and precise details, which are rarely to be found, an effort, at least, must be made to seize the salient points, and to bring out such features of their life as may touch or enlighten posterity.

And, in the first place, to give any exact representation of the Anglo-Saxon nuns as they appeared in their own consciousness and to the eyes of their countrymen, the important part played by women among the Teutonic races must be borne in mind. Nothing had more astonished the Romans than the austere chastity of the German women;[2] the religious respect of the men for the partners of their labors and dangers, in peace as well as in war; and the almost divine honors with which they surrounded the priestesses or prophetesses, who sometimes presided at their religious rites, and sometimes led them to combat against the violators of the national soil.[3] When the

Great part played by women among the Teutonic races.

[1] "That voluntary prison into which they threw themselves for the love of God." — Bossuet, *Exorde du Sermon sur Jésus Christ comme Sujet de Scandale.*

[2] "Severa illic matrimonia: nec ullam morum partem magis laudaveris. . . . Ne se mulier extra virtutum cogitationes, extraque bellorum casus putet, ipsis incipientis matrimonii auspiciis admonetur, venire se laborum periculorumque sociam, idem in pace, idem in prælio passuram ausuramque. . . . Paucissima in tam numerosa gente adulteria." — Tacit., *De Mor. German.*, c. 18, 19.

[3] *Ibid.*, c. 8. Cf. Cæsar, *De Bell. Gall.*, i, 50, 51.

Roman world, undermined by corruption and imperial despotism, fell to pieces like the arch of a *cloaca*, there is no better indication of the difference between the debased subjects of the empire and their conquerors, than that sanctity of conjugal and domestic ties, that energetic family feeling, that worship of pure blood, which are founded upon the dignity of woman, and respect for her modesty, no less than upon the proud independence of man and the consciousness of personal dignity. It is by this special quality that the barbarians showed themselves worthy of instilling a new life into the West, and becoming the forerunners of the new and Christian nations to which we all owe our birth.

Especially among the Anglo-Saxon descendants of the Cimbri.

Who does not recall those Cimbri whom Marius had so much trouble in conquering, and whose women rivalled the men in boldness and heroism? Those women, who had followed their husbands to the war, gave to the Romans a lesson in modesty and greatness of soul of which the future tools of the tyrants and the Cæsars were not worthy. They would surrender only on the promise of the consul that their honor should be protected, and that they should be given as slaves to the vestals, thus putting themselves under the protection of those whom they believed virgins and priestesses. The great beginner of democratic Dictatorship refused: upon which they killed themselves and their children, generously preferring death to shame.[4] The Anglo-Saxons came from the same districts bathed by the waters of the Northern Sea, which had been inhabited by the Cimbri,[5] and showed themselves worthy of descent from them, as much by the irresistible onslaught of their warriors, as by the indisputable power of their women. No trace of the old Roman spirit which put a wife *in manu*, in the hand of her husband, that is to say, under his feet, is to be found among them. Woman is a person and not a thing. She lives, she speaks, she acts for herself, guaranteed against the least outrage by severe penalties, and protected by universal respect. She inherits, she disposes of her possessions — sometimes even she deliberates, she fights, she governs, like the most proud and powerful of

[4] Florus, l. iii. c. 3.

[5] "Proximi Oceano Cimbri tenent, parva nunc civitas, sed gloria ingens." — *De Moribus German.*, c. 37. Jutland, Schleswig, and Holstein, from whence came the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, bore the name of the Cimbric Chersonese.

men.[6] The influence of women has been nowhere more effectual, more fully recognized, or more enduring than among the Anglo-Saxons, and nowhere was it more legitimate or more happy.

From the beginning of Christianity, women everywhere became, as has been seen at every page of this narrative, the active and persevering, as well as daring and unwearied assistants of the Christian apostles; and when the conversion of the race was complete, no Fredigond appeared, as among the Gallo-Franks, to renew the evil behavior of the Roman empresses. If there existed among these queens and princesses certain violent and cruel souls, there was not one who could be accused of loose morals or immodest inclinations. The national legend is here in perfect accord with the monastic, and popular tradition with history. From the beautiful Rowena, sister of the first conqueror Hengist, to the famous Countess Godiva — from the daughter of Ethelbert, who carried the faith into Northumbria, to the wife of Ina, who procured the conversion of her husband — we encounter, with few exceptions, only attractive and generous figures, in whom beauty and modesty meet together, and the gentleness natural to woman is allied with an energy which reaches heroism.

From this fact arises the extreme importance attached by the Anglo-Saxons to matrimonial alliances which united among themselves the various sovereign dynasties, and the nations or tribes whose local independence and glorious recollections were personified by them. These unions, by renewing periodically the ties of a common nationality, gave to the princesses of the race of Odin the office of mediatrix and peacemaker to a degree which justifies the touching surname given to woman in the primitive poetry of the Anglo-Saxons, where she is described as *freodowebbe*, she who weaves the links of peace.[7]

Thence, too, arose the great position held by the queens in all the states of the Anglo-Saxon confederation. Possessing a court, legal jurisdiction, and territorial revenue on her

[6] In this respect there was no difference between the victors and the vanquished. Women had always occupied an important place among the Britons, and often reigned and fought at their head; witness Boadicea immortalized by Tacitus. Free women, married and possessing five acres of land, voted in the public assemblies of the *clans* or tribes of Britain. — *Ancient Laws of Cambria* — ap. PALGRAVE and LAPPENBERG.

[7] *Beowulf*, verse 3880.

own account,[8] surrounded with the same homage, sometimes invested with the same rights and authority as the sovereign, his wife took her place by his side in the political and religious assemblies, and her signature appeared in acts of foundation, in the decrees of the councils and in the charters, sometimes followed by those of the king's sisters, or other princesses of the royal house. Sometimes these royal ladies, associated, as they were among the Teutons of whom Tacitus speaks, in all their husbands' cares, labors, and dangers, gave all their efforts, like Ermenilda of Mercia, to the conversion of a still heathen kingdom;[9] sometimes, like Sexburga in Wessex, they exercised the regency with full royal authority, and almost manly vigor.[10] There is no instance of a woman reigning alone by hereditary right or by election. But the mysterious act which ended the days of the Northumbrian Osthryda,[11] Queen of the Mercians, reminds us that we are in the country where Mary Stuart, the first who ever lost a crowned head on a scaffold, was to prove that women were there destined to all the greatness and all the calamities of supreme power.

At the same time it would be a strange delusion to suppose that the traditional respect shown by the Teutonic races to woman, or to certain women, was sufficiently strong or universal to restrain all the excesses of the most formidable passion and most imperious instinct of fallen humanity, among the Anglo-Saxons. Of all the victories of Christianity there is none more salutary and more necessary, and at the same time none more hardly and painfully won, than that which it has gained, gained alone and everywhere, though with a daily renewed struggle, over the unregulated inclinations which stain and poison the fountains of life. Its divinity here shows itself by a triumph which no rival philosophy,

[8] Lappenberg, vol. i. p. 564.

[9] See above, p. 340.

[10] Sexburga, widow of the King of Wessex, Kinewalk, was made Queen-Regent by her husband at his death in 673. "Nec deerat mulieri spiritus ad obeunda regni munia. Ipsa novos exercitus moliri, veteres tenere in officio, ipsa subjectos clementer moderari, hostibus minaciter infremere, prorsus omnia facere, ut nihil præter sexum discerneres. Verumtamen plus quam femineos animos anhelantem vita destituit, vix annua potestate perfunctam." — Guill. Malmesb., i. 32; Ric. Cirenc., ii. 40.

[11] "A suis, id est Merciorum primatibus, interempta." — Bede, v. 24. "Crudeliter necaverunt." — Matth. Westmonast., ad. ann. 696. See in pp. 299, 414, 420, what we have said of her, and her devotion to her uncle, St. Oswald, and her husband Ethelred, the friend of Wilfrid, who abdicated to become a monk at Bardeney.

no adverse doctrine, has ever equalled, or will ever aspire to equal. No doubt the barbarians, according to the testimony of the Fathers, were more chaste than the Romans of the Empire. To succeed in introducing a respect for modesty and priestly celibacy in the midst of the corruptions of imperial Rome — to raise in the midst of the universal debasement the type of virginity consecrated to God — religion needed an amount of strength, majesty, and constancy, which the terrible wrestle maintained for three centuries could alone have given to it.

Neither was it a brief or easy enterprise to offer and place the yoke of continence upon the shoulders of a barbarous race, in proportion as they seized their prey, and established themselves as masters of the future. It was a glorious and painful task to struggle day by day in that terrible confusion, in the desperate obscurity of the tempest, against an innumerable band of victors, inflamed by all the lusts of strength and conquest, and poisoned even by contact with their victims. The struggle was long, glorious, difficult, and triumphant. It was no longer the unnatural debauchery and monstrous orgies of the Roman empire which had to be denounced; but there remained the vile and gross inclinations, the brutally disordered appetites of human and savage nature. There are excesses and crimes which, though not set forth in the pages of Petronius and Suetonius, though seen only in glimpses through the articles of a penitentiary, the canons of a council, the mutilated text of a legend or chronicle, reveal no less gulfs of shame and sorrow. The Teutons were more respectful than the Orientals or Romans to those women whom they considered their own equals or superiors; but who shall say what was the fate of those of inferior condition, and especially of the unfortunates hidden in the dreary darkness of slavery or serfdom? Who shall say what were the sublime and forever unknown efforts which were made by the priests of a God of purity to wrest so many young captives, so many slave or serf girls, from the harems of princes, from the pitiless passion of victorious warriors, and the tyrannical caprices of their masters? God alone knows these efforts, God alone has rewarded them. Attentive and sincere history can but note the general result, which was immense and glorious.

Christian civilization has triumphed, and its triumph rests, above all, upon respect for the wife, virgin, and mother —

that transfigured woman of whom the mother of God has become the type and guardian in Christian nations.[12]

It is Christianity which has armed woman with her own weakness, and made of it her strength — a strength more august and respected than any other: "when I am weak, then am I strong." The Christian religion has been the true country of woman; the only one in which she has found her true freedom, her true destiny, coming out of Egyptian bondage, escaping from paganism, from savage life, or from the still more shameful debasement of civilized depravity. This also, and this alone, could give a free field to all the virtues which are characteristically her own, those which make her not only equal, but often superior to man — generosity, the heroism of patience and self-devotion, suffering accepted for the help of others, victory over selfishness, and the sacrifice of pride to love. This work of atonement and salvation, which is the only true emancipation of woman, and, by her, of virtue and the soul, has been the work of the Church with the aid of the Teutonic race.

And the Church has done this work only by elevating above and beyond the level of virtue, which women in general can reach, that ideal of moral virtue and beauty which can be realized only by virginity consecrated to God. She has raised this ideal above the virtues most admired and most worthy to be admired among the ancient nations, even among the Jews, where fruitfulness was a woman's supreme glory. She has given embodiment, discipline, law, a soul, an inextinguishable light, to the confused notions spread throughout antiquity; she has transformed into a splendid and immortal army those little groups of vestals, sibyls, and Druidesses, which were scattered through the heathen world. Respect for modesty, which among the most generous nations was the privilege of a small and chosen number, she has brought to be the inviolable inheritance of every human creature: at the same time she has made the privileged state of virginity consecrated to God to be the common dowry of Christendom, the lawful and supreme ambition of the poorest child of the people, as well as of the daughter of kings; and for eighteen centuries she has drawn from all countries and conditions, myriads of chaste and radiant creatures, who have rushed to her altars, bringing their heart and life to God who became man in order to redeem them.

[12] See *L'Histoire de Sainte Elisabeth*, Introduction, pp. 76, 134.

No people honors virginity more than the Anglo-Saxons.

Our Anglo-Saxons were neither the last nor the least instruments of this glorious transformation. Amid all the overflowings of their natural intemperance, they had preserved the instinct and a sense of the necessity of veneration for things above: they could, at least, honor the virtues which they would not or could not practise. The spectator stands amazed at the crowd of neophytes of both sexes who came from all the races of the Heptarchy, to vow themselves to perpetual continence. None of the new Christian nations seem to have furnished so great a number; and among none does Christian virginity seem to have exercised so prompt and so supreme an influence. The young Anglo-Saxon women who gave themselves to God, though they were initiated into the life of the cloister in the Gallo-Frankish monasteries, which had the advantage of being sooner established than those of England, had to return to their own island to realize their own value in the eyes of their countrymen.

The Anglo-Saxon conquerors regarded with tender and astonished respect the noble daughters of their race, who appeared to them surrounded by an unknown, a supernatural grandeur, and power at once human and divine — victorious over all the passions, all the weaknesses and lusts, of which victory had but developed the germs. This respect soon became apparent in the national laws, which agreed in placing under the safeguard of severe penalties the honor and freedom of those upon whom Anglo-Saxon legislation bestowed the title of *brides of the Lord* and *spouses of God*.[13]

Influence and authority of the abbesses.

When one of these holy maidens found herself invested, by the choice of her companions, or the nomination of a bishop, with the right of governing and representing a numerous community of her companions, the chiefs and people of the Heptarchy accorded her, without hesitation, all the liberties and attributes of the most elevated rank. The abbesses, as we have seen by the example of Hilda, Ebba, and Elfleda, had soon an influence and authority which rivalled that of the most venerated bishops and abbots. They had often the retinue and state of princesses, especially when they came of royal blood. They treated with kings, bishops, and the greatest lords on terms of perfect equality; and as the rule of the cloister does not seem to have existed for them, they are to be seen going

[13] "*Godes bryde.*" — THORPE'S *Ancient Laws of England*, vol. ii. pp. 188, 206, 207.

where they please,[14] present at all great religious and national solemnities, at the dedication of churches, and even, like the queens, taking part in the deliberations of the national assemblies, and affixing their signatures to the charters therein granted. The twenty-third article of the famous law or *dooms* of Ina sets, in certain points, not only abbots, but abbesses, on the same level with kings and the greatest personages of the country.[15] In the Council of Beccancelde, held in 694 by the bishop and king of Kent, the signatures of five abbesses appear in the midst of those of the bishops, affixed to decrees intended to guarantee the inviolability of the property and freedom of the Church.[16]

How were the monasteries filled whose superiors occupied so elevated a rank in the spiritual and temporal hierarchy of the Anglo-Saxons, and what was their life? This question it will be both important and difficult to answer.

No contemporary writer has left us a complete authentic picture of the interior of the great Anglo-Saxon communities. No indisputable document is in existence which brings before us the system of rules and customs followed by thousands of nuns who wore the black robe and veil of the spouses of the Lord. We are reduced to the scanty incidents which are to

[14] The reader may remember the meeting appointed by the Abbess Elfleda of Whitby with St. Cuthbert at Coquet Island, and also the festival to which she invited the same bishop on the dedication of a church built on one of her estates. See pp. 407, 477.

[15] "Si homo alienigena occidatur, habeat rex duas partes *were* suæ et terciam partem habeant filii vel parentes sui. Si parentes non habeat, dimidiam habeat rex, dimidiam consocii. Si autem abbas *vel abbatissa* intersit, dividant eodem modo cum rege." — THORPE'S *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, pp. 471–500, fol. ed.

[16] This is the council mentioned above, p. 314, and which is also known under the names of Bapchild and Beckenham: the king who presided at it, Withred, reigned thirty-three years. The decrees were given by the votes of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Rochester, "cum abbatibus, *abbatissis*, presbyteris, diaconibus, ducibus, et satrapis." — WILKINS, *Concilia*, i. p. 47. In Coletti, vol. viii. p. 79, there are five signatures of abbesses: —

Signum manus:		Mildredæ, abbatissæ.
"	"	Etheldridæ, abbatissæ.
"	"	Aetæ, abbatissæ.
"	"	Wilnodæ, abbatissæ.
"	"	Hereswidæ, abbatissæ.

The other signatures are those of the king and queen Werburga for their infant son, afterwards of two princes or lay lords, of the archbishop, the two bishops, and seven priests; there are no abbots. Kemble, vol. ii. p. 198, maintains that all signatures of women, other than queens, which are found attached to certain rare charters, must be those of abbesses summoned to attend assemblies where there might be question of the interests of their communities. Lingard (vol. i. p. 239) is more sceptical on this subject.

be found in the history of the time, in that of the reigning families from which came most of the principal abbesses, and specially from the biographies of the most holy or most celebrated among these illustrious women. But by contrasting these incidents with those which reveal to us the origin and result of similar vocations among all the other Christian nations, by lighting them up with the light which shines in history, from the commencement of Christianity, we arrive at a point of comprehension perhaps satisfactory enough, but with which at least we must content ourselves.

In the absence of any existing record of their special rules and customs, the liturgical remains of the Anglo-Saxon Church reveal to us the spirit which animated both the pontiffs, and the novices by whom these great and frequent sacrifices were made. There, as everywhere else, under the ancient discipline, it was the bishop, and he alone, who had the right of receiving the final vows of the virgin and of consecrating her solemnly to God. Although the Irish, with their habitual rashness, permitted girls to take the veil at the age of twelve,[17] the Anglo-Saxon Church forbade the taking of the irrevocable vows until after the twenty-fifth year had been accomplished, in accordance with a custom which began to prevail in the whole Church, and which was a modification of the decrees of the Pope St. Leo and the Emperor Majorian, who had deferred to the age of forty the reception of the solemn benediction. On the day fixed for that ceremony, which took place only at the principal festivals of the year, and in presence of a numerous assemblage, the bishop began by blessing the black robe which was henceforward to be the sole adornment of the bride of God. The novice put it on in a private room,[18] from which she came forth, thus clothed, and was led to the foot of the altar, after the reading of the Gospel; the officiating bishop having already begun to say mass. There she listened to his exhortation; after which he asked for two public engagements which were indispensable to the validity of the act: in the first place, the consent of the parents and other guardians of the novice; and in the second place, her own promise of obedience to himself and his successors. When this had been done he laid his hands upon her to bless her and consecrate her to the God whom she had chosen. The Pontifical

Ceremony used at the solemn benediction of an Anglo-Saxon nun.

[17] Martene, *De Antiquis Ecclesiæ Ritibus*, lib. ii. c. 6, vol. iii. p. 109.

[18] "De papilione aut loco ubi benedictas vestes inducrant, accersebantur per archipresbyterum virgines consecrandæ."

of Egbert, Archbishop of York, and an Anglo-Saxon manuscript found in the Norman abbey of Jumiéges, have preserved to us the prayers used by the bishop at this supreme moment. The maternal tenderness of the Church overflows in them with a fulness and majesty which recalls the *Menées* of the Greek Church to such a degree, that it might be supposed old Archbishop Theodore, the contemporary of Egbert's most illustrious predecessor, had brought from the depth of Asia Minor into the Northumbrian capital this ardent breath of Oriental inspiration.

"May God bless thee, God the creator of heaven and earth, the Father all-powerful, who has chosen thee as He chose St. Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, to preserve thy virginity entire and spotless, as thou hast promised before God and the angels. Persevere then in thy resolutions and keep thy chastity with patience, that thou mayest be worthy of the virgin's crown.

"May God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit bless thee with all blessings, that thou mayest remain immaculate and perfect under the robe of St. Mary, the mother of Christ. May the Spirit of God, the Spirit of wisdom and strength, of knowledge and piety, rest upon thee and fill thee with the fear of God. May He deign to establish thy frailty, fortify thy weakness, confirm thy strength, govern thy soul, direct thy steps, inspire thy thoughts, approve thy acts, complete thy works; may He edify thee by His charity, illuminate thee by His knowledge, keep thee by His mercy, exalt thee by His holiness, strengthen thee by patience, bring thee to obedience, prostrate thee in humility, encourage thee in continence, teach thee frugality, visit thee in infirmity, relieve thee in sadness, reanimate thee in temptation, moderate thee in prosperity, soften thee in anger, protect thy modesty, correct thy sins, pardon thy backslidings, and teach the discipline which shall lead thee, strong in all virtue and resplendent in good works, to do everything in view of the eternal reward! Mayest thou always have for thy witness Him whom thou shalt one day have for thy judge, that when thou enterest into the bridal chamber with thy lamp lighted in thy hand, thy divine Spouse may find in thee nothing impure and sordid, a soul white as snow, and a body shining with purity; so that at the terrible day of judgment the avenging flame may find nothing to consume in thee, and divine mercy find everything to crown! Mayest thou, purified in this world by monastic life, rise to the tribunal of the eternal King to

dwell in his celestial presence with the hundred and forty-four thousand innocents who follow the Lamb wherever He goes, singing the new song, and receiving the reward of thy labors here below in the dwelling-place of those who live forever.[19] Blessed be thou from the highest heaven by Him who came to die upon the cross to redeem the human race, Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns forever with the Father and the Holy Spirit."

The bishop then placed the veil[20] on her head, saying, "Maiden, receive this veil,[21] and mayest thou bear it stainless to the tribunal of Jesus Christ, before whom bends every knee that is in heaven and earth and hell."

Then he continued: "O God, who deignest to inhabit

[19] "Fragilem solidet, invalidam roboret, validamque confirmet, pietate allevet, miseratione conservet, mentem regat, vias dirigat, cogitationes sanctas instituat, actus probet, opera perficiat, caritate ædificet, sapientia illuminet, castitate muniat, scientia instruat, fide confirmet, in virtute multiplicet, in sanctitate sublimet, ad patientiam præparet, ad obedientiam subdat, in humilitate prosternat, ad continentiam det fortitudinem, reddat sobriam, protegat pudicam, in infirmitate visitet, in dolore relevet, in tentatione erigat, in conversatione custodiat, in prosperitate temperet, in iracundia mitiget, iniquitatem emendet, infundat gratiam, remittat offensa, tribuat disciplinam, ut his et his similibus virtutibus fulta et sanctis operibus illustrata, illa semper studeas agere, quæ digna fiant in remuneratione. Illum habeas testem quem habitura es judicem; et aptare, ut præfulgentem gestans in manu lampadem, intratura sponsi thalamum occurras venienti cum gaudio, et nihil in te reperiat fœtidum, nihil sordidum, nihil incultum, nihil corruptum, nihil inhonestum, sed niveam et candidam animam corpusque lucidum atque splendidum; ut cum dies ille tremendus, remuneratio justorum retributioque malorum advenerit, non inveniat in te ultrix flamma quod uret sed divina pietas quod coronet, quæ jam in hoc sæculo conversatio religiosa mundavit, ut tribunal æterni regis ascensura celsa palatia cum eisdem mereareris portionem qui sequuntur Agnum, et cantant canticum novum sine cessatione, illic preceptura præmium post laborem, semperque maneas in viventium regione atque ipse benedicat te de cœlis, qui per crucis passionem humanum genus est dignatus venire in terris redimere Jesus Christus, Dominus noster, qui," &c. — MARTENE, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

[20] The veil was sometimes white, as is apparent from the following service, *De Virgine Vestienda*, taken from an Irish manuscript, in the Library of Zurich, and quoted in the *Missal of Arbuthnott* of Dr. Forbes, p. xiv. (Burntisland, 1864): —

"Oremus, fratres carissimi, misericordiam ut cunctum bonum tribuere dignetur huic puellæ N. quæ Deo votum candidam vestem perferre cum integritate coronæ in resurrectione vitæ æternæ quam facturus est, orantibus nobis, prestet Deus.

"Conserva, Domine, istius devotæ pudorem castitatis, dilectionem continentiæ in factis, in dictis, in cogitationibus. Per te, Christe Jesu, qui, etc.

"Accipe, puellam, pallium candidum, quod perferas ante tribunal Domini."

[21] "Accipe, puella, vel vidua, pallium." — MARTENE, *op. cit.*, p. 117. It is evident that these formulas were used at the consecration of widows as well as of virgins.

chaste forms, and lovest the virgin soul; God who hast renewed humanity corrupted by the fraud of the devil, and re-established it by the creating Word, so as not only to restore it to primitive innocence, but to procure it everlasting possessions, and to raise it from the bosom of creatures still bound with the chains of this life, to a level with the angels:

"Look upon Thy servant here present, who, placing in Thy hand the resolution to live forever in chastity, offers to Thee the devotion with which this vow has inspired her. Give to her, Lord, by thy Holy Spirit, a prudent modesty, a benevolent wisdom, a sweet gravity, a chaste freedom.[22] How could a soul imprisoned in this mortal flesh have vanquished the law of nature, the liberty of license, the strength of habit, the pricks of youth, hadst Thou not lighted in her the flame of virginity, didst Thou not Thyself nourish the flame by the courage which Thou deignest to inspire her with? Thy grace is spread throughout all nations under the sun, which are as many as the stars in number; and among all the virtues which Thou hast taught to the heirs of Thy New Testament, one gift flows from the inexhaustible fountain of Thy generosity upon certain persons which, without diminishing in anything the honor of marriage, and the blessing which Thou hast promised on the conjugal tie, enables those higher souls to disdain all mortal union, to aspire to the sacrament which unites Jesus Christ to His Church, to prefer the supernatural union of which marriage is the emblem to the natural reality of marriage. This blessed virgin has known her Creator, and, emulating the purity of the angels, desires to belong only to Him who is the Spouse and the Son of perpetual virginity. Protect then, Lord, her who implores Thy help, and who comes here to be consecrated by Thy blessing. Let not the ancient enemy who is so skilful to turn aside the most excellent desires by the most insidious assaults, ever succeed in withering in her the palm of perfect maidenhood.

"Grant, Lord, by the gift of Thy Spirit, that she may keep the faith which she has sworn to Thee, that at the unknown day of Thy coming, far from being troubled, she may go forth to meet Thee in all security, and enter freely with

[22] "Sit in ea . . . prudens modestia, sapiens benignitas, gravis lenitas, casta libertas." — *Ibid.*, p. 119.

the choir of wise virgins by the royal gates of Thy eternal dwelling-place."[23]

At the conclusion of the mass, the pontiff pronounced upon the new nun a new benediction, which was turned by the acclamations of the people into a kind of dialogue.

"Send, Lord, Thy heavenly blessing upon Thy servant here present, upon our sister, who humbles herself under Thy hand, and cover her with Thy divine protection."

And all the people answered, Amen.

The Bishop. — May she ever flee from sin, know and desire what is good, and win the sacred treasures of heaven.

People. — Amen.

Bishop. — May she always obey the divine precepts, escape with their aid from the violent rebellions of the flesh, vanquish depraved voluptuousness by the love of chastity, keep always in her lamp the oil of holiness, and delight herself in the radiance of eternal light.

People. — Amen.

Bishop. — May she ever carry in her hand the sacred fire, and thus enter at the royal gate of heaven, in the footsteps of Christ, to live forever with wise and spotless souls.

People. — Amen.

Bishop. — May He whose empire is without end grant our prayers.

People. — Amen.

[23] "Deus castorum corporum benignus habitator. . . . Respice super hanc famulam tuam N. quæ in manu tua continentiæ suæ propositum collocans, tibi devotionem suam offert, a quo et ipsa idem votum assumpsit. Quando enim animus mortali carne circumdatus, legem naturæ, libertatem licentiæ, vim consuetudinis, et stimulos ætatis evinceret, nisi tu hanc flammam virginitatis, vehementer accenderes tu hanc cupiditatem in ejus corde benignus aleres, ut fortitudinem ministrares? Effusa namque in omnes gentes gratia tua, ex omni natione, quæ est sub cœlo, in stellarum innumerabilem numerum, novi Testamenti hæredibus adoptatis, inter cæteras virtutes, quas filiis tuis non ex sanguinibus, neque ex voluntate carnis, sed de tuo spiritu genitis indidisti, etiam hoc donum in quasdam mentes de largitatis tuæ fonte defluxit, ut cum honorem nuptiarum nulla interdicta minuissent, et super conjugalem copulam tua benedictione permaneret; existerent tamen sublimiores animæ, quæ non concupiscerent quod habet mortale connubium; sed hoc eligerent quod promisit divinum Christi Ecclesiæ sacramentum: nec imitarentur quod nuptiis agitur, sed diligerent quod nuptiis prænotatur. Agnovit auctorem suum beata virginitas, et æmula integritatis angelicæ, illius thalamo illius cubiculo se devovit, qui sic perpetuæ integritatis est sponsus, quemadmodum perpetuæ virginitatis est filius. Imploranti ergo auxilium tuum, Domine, et confirmari se benedictionis tuæ consecratione cupienti, da protectionis tuæ munimen et regimen, ne hostis antiquus qui excellentiora studia, subtilioribus infestat insidiis, ad obscurandam perfectæ continentiæ palmam per aliquam mentis serpat incuriam, et rapiat de proposito virginum quod etiam moribus decet inesse nuptarum." — *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Bishop. — The blessing of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, rest upon thee, my sister, hereafter and forever.

People. — Amen.[24]

II.

The number of bishops being so small, and the ever-increasing multitude of nuns so great, it is doubtful whether these touching and solemn services could be used in the case of all the virgins consecrated to the Lord in the Anglo-Saxon cloisters.[25] But it may be believed that they were never omitted when a maiden or widow of one of the reigning dynasties of the blood and race of Odin sought the veil of the spouses of the Lord.

Anglo-Saxon queens and princesses in the cloister.

For in England as elsewhere, and perhaps more than elsewhere, the nuns were at the same time of the highest and of the humblest classes. Some were born of those conquering and sovereign races whose exploits have been reviewed, in which the blood of the Merovingians sometimes mingled with that of the offspring of the Norse Olympus, and which, by intermarrying always among themselves, maintained in all its native purity the character of the descendants of Odin, —

"Du sang de Jupiter *issues* des deux côtés," —

they summed up in themselves all that their countrymen held in highest esteem as greatness and majesty.

But beside them, and sometimes above, when placed there by the election of communities, appears the daughter of

[24] "Effunde, Domine, benedictionem cœlestem super hanc famulam, sororem nostram N. . . . quæ se humiliavit sub dextera tua.

"Protege eam protectione tua divina. Amen.

"Fugiat universa delicta, sciat sibi bona desideria præparata, ut regni cœlestis sancta conquirat lucra. Amen.

"Pareat semper divinis præceptis, ut te adjuvante vitet incendia carnis, omnemque libidinem pravæ voluptatis superet amore castitatis, habeat in se oleum sanctitatis, et lætetur cum lampadibus sempiternis. Amen.

"Gestet in manibus faces sanctas, et apud sapientes et castissimas animas, duce Christo, introire mereatur januam regni cœlestis. Amen.

"Quod ipse præstare dignetur, cujus regnum et imperium sine fine permanet in sæcula sæculorum." — MARTENE, *op. cit.*, p. 121. Cf. LINGARD, *Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 14.

[25] No. 92 of the *Excerptiones* of Archbishop Egbert renews the prohibition of Pope Gelasius to give the veil to nuns at any other time than the feasts of Epiphany, Easter, or the feasts of the Apostles, unless the novice was dying.

the obscure Saxon, of the *ceorl*, perhaps even of the conquered Briton; and others from a still greater distance and lower level, redeemed from slavery and withdrawn from outrage, from the stains which were the too frequent consequence of captivity. All marched under the same banner, that of sacrifice; all bore its glorious mark. Some gave up a crown, wealth, and greatness; others their family, their love, their freedom; all had to give up themselves. The meanest in birth were certainly not those to whom the sacrifice was the most costly. It is too probable that these Anglo-Saxon princesses and great ladies were naturally haughty and insolent, hard and unkindly to the rest of mankind — in some cases bloodthirsty and pitiless, like the heroines of the Teutonic epic, Criemhild and Brunehild; and of all the miracles wrought by Christianity in England, there is scarcely any more wonderful than the transformation of so great a number of such women, in the new communities, into docile daughters, cordial sisters, mothers truly tender and devoted to their inferiors in age and blood.

It must be acknowledged that the observation of the chroniclers of those distant centuries rarely goes beyond the queens and princesses, whose religious vocation must have specially edified and touched the souls of their contemporaries; and who, beautiful, young, and sought in marriage by princes of rank equal to their own, gave up the world to keep their love entire for God, and to consecrate so many places of refuge at once peaceful and magnificent for future generations of God's servants.

In respect to the maidens of humbler origin, but of life as pure and self-devotion as dauntless, who surround the greater personages of our tale, we can but follow the ancient authors, taking advantage of every indication which throws light upon the life and soul of so great a multitude.

The queens and princesses range themselves into three principal classes. They were, in the first place, virgins devoted to God, sometimes from the cradle, like the abbesses Ebba of Coldingham and Elfleda of Whitby, who were the devoted friends and protectresses of Wilfrid. Then followed wives who separated themselves from their husbands, during their lifetime, and often much against their will, to embrace a religious life: of this class St. Etheldreda is the most celebrated example. And, finally, widows who ended in the cloister a life mostly devoted on the throne to the active extension as well as the self-sacrificing practice of the new

religion. We have seen more than one touching example of the last-named class — such as that of Queen Eanfleda, the first benefactress of Wilfrid, who, after the death of her husband King Oswy, found shelter for her widowhood at Whitby, and there ended her days under the crosier of her daughter.

The first nuns trained in France.

By a privilege which does honor to France, it was among us, in the country of Queen Bertha, the first Christian queen of the Anglo-Saxons, that the first English nuns were trained. France was thus the cradle of the Anglo-Saxon communities. In the time of the first missionaries, when monasteries were few, many of the new Christians of England learned the rules of monastic life among the Gallo-Franks, to whom they had been taught, more than a century before, by the glorious St. Martin, and after him by St. Maur, the cherished disciple of St. Benedict, and by St. Columbanus, the illustrious propagator of Celtic monachism. The Anglo-Saxons sent or took their daughters into Gaul, and the first beginning, in particular, of the great Christianity which was about to burst the bud in Great Britain, seems to have been specially prepared and formed in the communities on the banks of the Marne and the Seine, at Jouarre, Faremoutier, les Andelys, and later at Chelles.[25]

Especially at Faremoutier.

Jouarre, Faremoutier, and the neighboring monasteries formed a sort of monastic province, dependent on Luxeuil, and occupied by the disciples of St. Columbanus.[27] The pious and courageous Burgundofara, *la noble baronne de Bourgogne*, blessed from her infancy by the holy patriarch of Luxeuil, ruled at Faremoutier the great foundation which has made her name illustrious for twelve centuries. She had with her an entire colony of young Anglo-Saxons. It had been the intention of Hilda, the great Abbess of Whitby, from the time when she made up her mind to leave the world,[28] to lead a conventual life in one

[26] "Multi de Britannia monachicæ conversationis gratia, Francorum vel Gallicorum monasteria adire solebant; sed et filias suas eisdem erudiendas ac sponso cœlesti copulandas mittebant." — Bede, l. iii. c. 8.

[27] See vol. i. pp. 608, 613.

[28] See p. 259. Bede says that it was at Chelles that Hereswida became a nun. Pagi, in his criticism on Baronius (ad ann. 680, c. 14 to 20), maintains by arguments too long to be quoted that Bede and Mabillon were both mistaken, one in supposing Hereswida to have been a nun at Chelles, and the other in thinking that Hilda joined her there. He proves that there was no trace of the two sisters either in the archives or calendars of Chelles before

of the cloisters on the banks of the Marne, where her sister, Hereswida, the Queen of East Anglia, even before she became a widow, had sought an asylum, and where she ended her life in the practice of the monastic rule.[29]

However, it was not the Northumbrians alone — as might have been expected from the connection which linked to the great Catholic apostles of converted France a country itself converted to Christianity by Celtic missionaries — who thus sought the spiritual daughters of St. Columbanus. The young princesses and daughters of the great lords belonging to the kingdom of Kent, which was exclusively converted by Roman missionaries, showed as much, or even greater eagerness. The great-granddaughter of the first Christian king of the Anglo-Saxons, Earcongotha, added a new lustre to the community of Faremoutier by the holiness of her life and death. She was, says Bede, a virgin of great virtue, worthy in everything of her illustrious origin.[30] East Anglia paid also its contribution to the powerful foundation of the noble Burgundofara. Two sisters of Etheldreda, whose strange story has been already recorded, governed in succession, notwithstanding their character of foreigners, the Gallo-Frankish Abbey of Faremoutier, while their sister founded the greatest convent of nuns which had yet been seen in England.[31] Ten centuries later another foreign princess, who had been received at Faremoutier, and whose memory has been made immortal by the genius of Bossuet, gave him an occasion to sound the praises of this famous house in a language which was perhaps more applicable to the community of the seventh century than to that of the seventeenth. "In the solitude of Sainte-Fare — as much separated from all worldly ways as its blessed position now separates it from all traffic with the world; in that holy mountain where the spouses of Jesus

1672, the epoch when the community obtained from Harlay, Archbishop of Paris, by means of the famous casuist St. Beuve, authority to celebrate the feast of St. Hilda on the 27th of November, and to inscribe the name of St. Hereswida on the calendar of the sacristy at the date of December 9.

[29] "In eodem monasterio soror ipsius Hereswid, mater Aldulfi regis orientalium Anglorum, regularibus subdita disciplinis, ipso tempore coronam expectabat æternam." — Bede, iv. 23. Pagi thinks she became a nun seven years before the death of her husband, but with his consent.

[30] "Ut condigna parenti soboles, magnarum fuit virgo virtutum, serviens Domino in monasterio quod . . . constructum est ab abbatissa nobilissima, vocabulo Fara." — Bede, iii. 8.

[31] "Sæthryd, filia uxoris Annæ regis . . . et filia naturalis ejusdem regis Ædilberg, quæ utraque, cum esset peregrina, præ merito virtutum . . . est abbatissa constituta." — *Ibid.* Cf. Bolland, vol. ii. July, p. 481.

Christ revive the beauty of ancient days, where the joys of earth are unknown, where the traces of worldly men, of the curious and wandering, appear not — under the guidance of the holy abbess, who gave milk to babes as well as bread to the strong, the beginning of the Princess Anne was very happy." [32]

The illustrious abbess whom Queen Bathilde, herself an Anglo-Saxon by birth, placed in the celebrated Monastery of Chelles when she re-established it, saw her community increased by a crowd of nuns whom the fame of her great qualities and tender kindness attracted from the other side of the Channel. Christians of both sexes felt the power of this attraction, for there were at Chelles as many Anglo-Saxon monks as nuns. Everything prospered so well, everything breathed a piety so active, fervent, and charitable, that the kings of the Heptarchy, moved by the perfume of virtue and good fame that rose from the double monastery peopled by their country-folks, emulated each other in praying the Abbess Bertile to send them colonies from her great bee-hive to occupy new foundations in England.[33]

Botulph and the two East Anglian princesses.

In this way probably came Botulph, whom we have already mentioned, and who was the one of Wilfrid's contemporaries most actively engaged in the extension of monastic institutions.[34] Before he was restored to his native soil, he had inspired with a lively and deep affection for himself two young Anglo-Saxon princesses who had been sent to France, when scarcely more than infants, to learn monastic life. They loved in him, we are told, not only a great master in holy and chaste living, but still more their countryman, a teacher of their own country and race. When they knew that he was about to return to England, they were overwhelmed with sadness, their only consolation in which was to recommend him with all their might to their young brother, who was king, it is not known where, under the regency of his mother; after

[32] *Oraison Funèbre de la Princesse Palatine, Anne de Gonzague.*

[33] "Cujus conversatio sobria et benignissima advocavit plurimas fidelium animas feminarum immoque et virorum. Nec solummodo ex vicina provincia, sed etiam ex transmarinis partibus, sanctæ hujus feminæ felici fama percurrente, ad eam relictis parentibus et patria cum summo amoris desiderio . . . festinabant. . . . Etiam a transmarinis partibus Saxoniæ reges illi fideles ab ea permissos postulabant . . . qui virorum et sanctimonialium cœnobia in illa regione construerent." — *Vita S. Bertilæ*, c. 5, 6, ap. MABILLON, *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, see vol. iii. p. 20.

[34] See p. 507.

which there is no mention of them in history.[35] The touching image of these two young creatures appears in history only to bear witness to the faithfulness of their patriotism in the pious exile which was imposed upon them. It is a sentiment of which we shall find many traces among the Anglo-Saxon nuns.

Were there Celtic nuns among the Anglo-Saxons?

But among the first nuns of the Heptarchy were there not, in the first place, virgins of Celtic origin, from Scotland or Ireland, like the monk-missionaries whose labors have been set forth? Nothing is more probable, though there is no positive proof of their existence. It would be impossible from this point of view to pass in silence a holy princess whose name is still popular in the north of England, and who has been long concluded by the annalists to be of Irish origin, while, at the same time, they recognize in her the instructress of the women and maidens of Northumbria in monastic life. To the west of this district, in the county which we now call Cumberland, upon a promontory bathed by the waves of the Irish Sea, and from which in clear weather the southern shore of Scotland and the distant peaks of the Isle of Man may be seen, a religious edifice still bears the name and preserves the recollection of St. Bega.[36] She was, according to the legend, the daughter of an Irish king, the most beautiful woman in the country, and already asked in marriage by the son of the King of Norway. But she had vowed herself, from her tenderest infancy, to the Spouse of virgins, and had received from an angel, as a seal of her celestial betrothal, a bracelet marked with the sign of the cross.[37] On the night

Legend of St. Bega.

[35] "Erant in eodem monasterio . . . sorores duæ Edelmundi regis . . . diligebantque præcipuum patrem Botulfum sicut doctorem sanctitatis et castimoniæ, et plurimum ob studium gentis suæ. Adhuc siquidem tenellulæ missæ fuerant ultra mare ad discendam in monasteriali gymnasio disciplinam cœlestis sophiæ. Videntes beatum ad dilectum Doctorem velle repatriare, mœrentes mandata imponunt præferenda regi et fratri."— *Vita S. Botulfi*, ap. *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, sæc. iii. vol. iii. p. 3.

[36] In English, St. Bees. This is the name still borne by the promontory surmounted by a lighthouse, and situated a little south of Whitehaven. Below the southern slope of the promontory, and sheltered by its height from the sea breezes, in the midst of a group of fine trees, stands the Priory, built by Raoul de Meschines in 1120, and restored in 1817, to be used as an English Church college. There remain still some precious relics of the buildings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and even, according to some antiquaries, of the Saxon edifice destroyed by the Danes, which preceded the Norman foundation.

[37] "Accipe, inquit, eulogium istud a Domino tibi missum, quo te illi

before her wedding day, while the guards of the king her father, instead of keeping watch, as usual, with sabres at their side and axes on their shoulders, were, like their guests, deep in the revel, she escaped alone, with nothing but the bracelet which the angel had given her, threw herself into a skiff, and landed on the opposite shore, in Northumbria, where she lived long in a cell in the midst of the wood, uniting the care of the sick poor around with her prayers.[38] Fear of the pirates who infested these coasts led her, after a while, farther inland. What then became of her? Here the confusion, which is so general in the debatable ground between legend and history, becomes nearly inextricable. Was it she who, under the name of Heïu, is pointed out to us by Bede as the woman to whom Bishop Aïdan, the apostle of Northumbria, gave the veil, and whom he placed at the head of the first nunnery which had been seen in the north of England?[39] Or was it she who, under the name of Begu, after having abdicated the dignity of abbess, lived for thirty years a humble and simple nun in one of the monasteries under the rule of the great Abbess of Whitby, Hilda, whose intimate friend she became, as well as her daughter in religion?[40] These are questions which have been long disputed by the learned, and which it seems impossible to bring to any satisfactory conclusion.[41] What is certain, however, is, that a virgin of

subaratam (*sic*) agnoscas. Pone ergo illud sicut signum super cor tuum et super brachium tuum, ut nullum admittas præter ipsum." — Cf. Cantic. viii. 6.

[38] "Erat speciosa forma præ cunctis filiabus regionis illius. . . . Virgo armillam super se fere indesinenter portavit. . . . Indulgebant calicibus epotandis potentes ad potandum et viri fortes ad miscendam ebrietatem. . . . Plures ex fortissimis Hyberniæ ambiebant totum palatium et uniuscujusque sica super femur suum et bipennis super humerum et lancea in manu ejus. . . . Pater ejus . . . inventam reduceret, et reductam plagis vapularet multis. . . . Omnia claustra ad tactum armillæ clavis David virgini egregiæ egredienti aperuit. . . . In loco tunc temporis satis nemoroso secus litus maris posito cellam virgineam sibi construxit." — *Vita S. Begæ et de Miraculis ejusdem*, ed. Tomlinson (Carlisle, 1842), pp. 46-53.

[39] See p. 259.

[40] Bede, *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 23.

[41] Most ancient authors believed this. The Bollandists themselves (vol. ii. Sept., p. 694) seem to admit it, though they seem to have had no knowledge of the *Life* of the saint, written by the monks of St. Bees, and which is founded entirely on this belief. The *Vita S. Begæ et de Miraculis ejusdem*, which was published for the first time in 1842, from a MS. in the British Museum, by Mr. Tomlinson, in the collection called *Carlisle Historical Tracts*, should not, however, in our opinion, counterbalance the contemporary testimony of Bede. The latter, always so careful to notice the Scottish origin of the personages of his narrative, whenever there is occasion, remains silent as to that of the first Northumbrian nun; and the two passages

the name of Bega figures among the most well known and long venerated saints of the north-west of England. She was celebrated during her lifetime for her austerity, her fervor, and an anxiety for the poor, which led her, during the building of her monastery, to prepare with her own hands the food of the masons, and to wait upon them in their workshops, hastening from place to place like a bee laden with honey.[42] She remained down to the middle ages, the patroness of the laborious and often oppressed population of the district, in which tradition presents her to us as arriving alone and fearless on a foreign shore, flying from her royal bridegroom. In the twelfth century the famous bracelet which the angel had given her was regarded with tender veneration: the pious confidence of the faithful turned it into a relic upon which usurpers, prevaricators, and oppressors against whom there existed no other defence, were made to swear, with the certainty that a perjury committed on so dear and sacred a pledge would not pass unpunished. It was also to Bega and her bracelet that the cultivators of the soil had recourse against the new and unjust taxes with which their lords burdened them. In vain the Scottish rievers, or the *prepotents* of the country, treading down under their horses' feet the harvests of the Cumbrians, made light of the complaints and threats of the votaries of St. Bega. "What is the good old woman to me, and what harm can she do me?" said one. "Let your Bega come!" said another —"let her come and do whatever she likes! She cannot make one of our horses cast their shoes."[43] Sooner or later

of the same chapter (iv. 23), where he speaks of Hefu, foundress of Hartlepool, and of Bega, contemporary with the death of Hilda, seem in no way to point to the same person. The Rev. Father Faber, in his *Life of St. Bega*, published while he was still an Anglican, in 1844, seems to hold that there were at least two saints whose acts are confounded together, and takes care to declare that his narrative does not pretend to historical accuracy. Wordsworth dedicated, in 1833, some of his finest verses to the still popular memory of the Irish saint, and of the places which bear her name.

[42] "In officinis monasterii construendis . . . manu sua cibos coquens parabat, artificibus apparebat, velut apis mellificans, currens et discurrens ministrabat." — *Vita S. Begh.*, p. 55.

[43] "Protulerunt in medium S. Begæ virginis armillam, quia confidebant inultum non præterire perjurium super illam perpetratum. . . . Versabatur illo tempore controversia inter eos qui dominabantur terræ de Coupelandia, et homines subditos sibi, super quadam consuetudine qua boves solebant dominis pensari. . . . Impetebantur homines et cogebantur plus reddere quam arbitrabantur se solvere debere. . . .

"'Quid mihi facere poterit vetula illa?' et manum ad secretiores partes natium admovens: 'Hic, hic, inquit, sagittabit me.' . . . Quidam autem

divine vengeance struck these culprits; and the fame of the chastisements sent upon them confirmed the faith of the people in the powerful intercession of her who, six hundred years after her death, still gave a protection so effectual and energetic against feudal rudeness, to the captive and to the oppressed, to the chastity of women, and the rights of the lowly, upon the western shore of Northumbria, as did St. Cuthbert throughout the rest of that privileged district.[44]

Confusion between legend and history.

In proportion, however, as the details of the lives of holy nuns in England are investigated, the difficulty of tracing the line of demarcation between history and legend becomes more and more evident. But after all let us not lament too much over this confusion. True history — "that which modifies souls, and forms opinions and manners"[45] — is not produced solely from dates and facts, but from the ideas and impressions which fill and sway the souls of contemporaries; translating into facts, anecdotes and scenes, the sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and love which inspire them for beings whom they believe to be of a superior nature to themselves, and whose benefits and example survive the ravages of time and human inconstancy.

We must then make up our minds to meet with this confusion through the entire series of our narratives, which are intended to give a picture of the faith and passions, the virtues and vices, of the new Christians of England, rather than to trace in methodical and chronological succession the course of uncertain or insignificant events. Let our readers be contented with our assurance that we will never permit ourselves to present to them, under the guise of truth, acts or words which are not of undisputed certainty.

adolescentulus sagittam . . . jaciens . . . percussit illum in fonticulo fondamenti, quem ipse manu sua designaverat. . . . 'Veniat Bega, veniat, et quod potest faciat.'" — *De Miraculis*, pp. 68, 69, 62, 66. There is a curious passage in this work, p. 63, as to the terror with which, in the twelfth century, the Scottish marauders were inspired by those English arrows which were afterwards so fatal to the French nobles in the great battles of the fourteenth century.

[44] See above, p. 486. The narrative of St. Bega's miracles is clearly of the same period and conceived in the same spirit as the *Libellus de Admirandis Beati Cuthberti Virtutibus*. The most popular of these miracles, and that best remembered in the country, reminds us of the one commemorated at Rome on the festival of St. Mary of the Snow, the 15th of August. A fall of snow, in the midst of summer, marked exactly the disputed possessions of the monastery, the same which had been the original domain of the saint. Compare the text published by Tomlinson, p. 64, and the tradition preserved in the MSS. of the Chapter of Carlisle, ap. *Notes on St. Bega*, p. 13.

[45] Littre, *Journal des Savants*, November, 1862.

Division of the nuns, whose biographies have been preserved, according to the dynasties from which they sprang.

To put some sort of order into the notes which we have gleaned on the subject of the Anglo-Saxon nuns, it will be well to arrange them according to the principal dynasties, or families and countries from which had issued all those noble women so devoted to God, St. Peter, and St. Benedict, who have gained a place on the altars of Catholic England.

The Northumbrians.

I do not think I have anything to add to what has already been said in respect to the Northumbrian princesses, descendants of Ella and Ida, the *Man of Fire* and the *Ravager*. The holy and powerful abbesses, Hilda of Whitby, Ebba of Coldingham, Elfleda, the daughter of Oswy, who was dedicated to God from her birth as a ransom for the liberation of her country, her mother Eanfleda, who on becoming a widow entered the abbey of her daughter — these often-repeated names cannot have escaped the memory of our readers. Let us add only, according to a tradition, ancient and widely spread,[46] though disputed by modern learning, that the three sons of Oswy who reigned over Northumberland in succession, and who have been so often mentioned in the life of Wilfrid, were all three forsaken by their wives, who determined to consecrate themselves to God; though doubtless the two princesses married to the elder and younger of these princes neither occasioned the same struggle nor won the same fame as their sister-in-law St. Etheldreda, the wife of King Egfrid.

Let us then pass to the princesses of the most ancient Anglo-Saxon dynasty, the first converted to Christianity, that of the Ascings who reigned over the Jutes in the kingdom of Kent.

The Ascings or dynasty of Kent.

The first and most historical figure which we meet in the cloister among the descendants of Hengist is that of the gentle and devoted Ethelburga, whose life is linked so closely with the history of the beginning of Northumbrian Christianity.[47] She was the daughter of the first Christian king of South Anglia, and married the first Christian king of the North, Edwin, whose conversion was so difficult, whose reign was so prosperous, and his end so glorious. After the rapid ruin of that first

[46] This tradition, accepted by Pagi (*ubi supra*) from William of Malmesbury, Alford, and many others, is disputed by the Bollandists as regards the two princesses married to the two brothers, Alchfrid the friend, and Aldfrid the enemy, of Wilfrid.

[47] See pp. 209, 221.

Northumbrian Christianity which she, along with Bishop Paulinus, had begun, Queen Ethelburga, received with tender sympathy by her brother, the King of Kent, cared for no other crown but that of holy poverty. She obtained from her brother the gift of an ancient Roman villa, situated between Canterbury and the sea, on the coast opposite France, and there founded a monastery, where she herself took the veil. She was thus the first widow of Saxon race who consecrated herself to monastic life. The old church of her monastery, called Lyminge, still exists. The burying-place of the foundress, who passed there the fourteen last years of her life, and who, daughter of the founder of Canterbury and widow of the founder of York, was thus the first link between the two great centres of Catholic life among the Anglo-Saxons, is still shown.[48] Ethelburga, founder of Lyminge.

We shall add nothing to what has been already said in respect to the daughter of Ethelburga, first Queen of Northumberland, and then a nun like her mother,[49] nor of her granddaughter, the Abbess Elfleda, the amiable friend of St. Cuthbert, and generous protectress of St. Wilfrid.[50] But she had a sister, named Eadburga, who was a nun with her at Lyminge, and who, buried by her side in the monastery, was venerated along with her among the saints of England.[51] Her brother, who, like his father, married a Frankish princess,[52] the great-granddaughter of Clovis and St. Clothilde, peopled with his descendants the Anglo-Saxon, and even foreign monasteries. Without speaking of his grand-daughters, Earcongotha, who became, as has been formerly said, Abbess of Faremoutier in France, and Ermenilda, Queen of Mercia, whom we have already seen, and shall meet again further on among the abbesses of Ely,[53] this second Christian king of the most ancient kingdom of the Heptarchy had a daughter called Eanswida, who, educated by the Roman

[48] It is believed that remains of the Roman buildings have been discovered in certain portions of the present church of Lyminge. The tomb of St. Ethelburga was situated under a buttress at the south-east of the choir. — Rev. R. C. Jenkins, *Account of the Church of St. Mary and St. Eadburgh in Lyminge;* London and Folkestone, 1859. Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, August, 1862.

[49] See pp. 253, 305, and genealogical tables, App., VI. and VII., pp. 752, 754.

[50] See pp. 406, 476.

[51] Bolland., *Act. SS.*, Feb., vol. ii. p. 383, and vol. iii. p. 690.

[52] Emma, daughter of Clotaire II. — Boll., vol. viii. Oct., p. 90.

[53] They were both daughters of King Ercombert and St. Sexburga, she who was Abbess of Ely after her sister Etheldreda. See genealogical table IX., p. 756.

Eanswida, founder of Folkestone.

missionaries at Canterbury, received from them the veil of the brides of God. She distinguished herself by the foundation of a monastery, which, with true Roman spirit, she dedicated to St. Peter, and of which she was the superior, at Folkestone, on the heights of those white cliffs crowned by green pasturage, which attract the first glance of the numberless travellers whom the rapid prows of our day deposit at that spot upon the English shore.

Legends of all kinds have accumulated round the name of this young and holy descendant of Hengist and Clovis; the gaps in her authentic history are filled by incidents which show the idea formed by the Anglo-Saxons of the supernatural power with which a monastic vocation invested a daughter of the sovereign race. Her father, it was told, proposed to marry her, like her aunt, to a Northumbrian prince, who was still a heathen. She obstinately refused. King Eadbald did not attempt to force her; but her suitor came with his train to urge his suit in person at a time when she was herself superintending the building of her future cloister. She sent him away without pity, defying him to lengthen, by the aid of his false gods, a rafter which was too short, which she herself succeeded in doing by praying with all her might to the true Saviour of the world. As soon as she was installed in her monastery she made it, after the fashion of all the religious foundations of the time, a great agricultural establishment as well as an ascetic sanctuary and a literary school. There, according to the popular tale, she tamed flocks of wild geese which spoiled her harvests, and which her servants stole from her poultry-yard and ate to her great displeasure; with the tip of her crosier she dug a canal to bring to the monastery a stream of fresh water which was wanting. She died young in 640: her abbey, which was built too near the sea on an overhanging rock, was swallowed up by the waves;[54] but the memory of this daughter of the conquering race, herself conquered by the love of God and her neighbor, long survived in the prayers of the faithful.[55] More than six hundred years after her death, a powerful Anglo-Norman baron renewed the Benedictine foundation of the Anglo-

[54] "A Romanis monachis velatam esse, nullum dubium est, et monasticum institutum ab eisdem edoctam. . . . Oratorium suum rupibus suspensum, mari supereminens." — Boll., vol iv. August, pp. 685, 686.

[55] The Bollandists have published a fragment of her office.

Saxon princess, dedicating the church to St. Peter and St. Eanswida.[56]

Another branch of the posterity of Hengist, issued from a young brother of Eanswida, who died before his father,[57] has also been taken possession of by legendary lore. This prince left two sons and four daughters; the latter were all nuns, and reckoned among the saints.[58] His two sons[59] were venerated as martyrs, according to the general idea of the time, which regarded as martyrdom every kind of violent death endured by the innocent. They were assassinated by a thane named Thunnor, who thus attempted to do a pleasure to King Egbert, the fourth successor of St. Ethelbert, by freeing him of young cousins who might become dangerous competitors.[60] The legend here rises to the rank of true poetry, and at the same time embodies true morality, as is almost always the case. In a vain attempt to hide, it says, the bones of his victims, the assassin buried them in the palace of the king, and even under the throne on which he sat on festive occasions;[61] but a supernatural light came to denounce the crime, shining upon the unknown tomb, and revealing it to the devotion of the faithful. The king, amazed and abashed, had to expiate the crime which was committed, if not by his orders at least to his advantage. Supported by the popular clamor, the two illustrious foreign monks, who were then the chief-justices and peace-makers of the country, Theodore, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the African Adrian, abbot of St. Augustin,[62] intimated to him that he must pay the *price of blood* — that is to say, the compensation ordained by all Teutonic laws — to a sister of the victims, and that all the more that this sister, called Domneva, was married to a Mercian prince, son of

Legend of Domneva and her brothers.

[56] This baron's name was John de Segrave, and his wife's Juliana de Sandwich. — Stevens, i. 399, ex. Weever, p. 270.

[57] He was called Ermenifred, and his death left the throne of Kent to his brother Ercombert, the third Christian king, father of King Ezfrid, and of the saints Ermenilda and Earcongotha. See genealogical table B.

[58] Ermenberga or Domneva, Ermenburga, Etheldreda, and Ermengytha.

[59] Ethelbert and Ethelred.

[60] Bede says nothing of all this; but it has been related with more or less of detail by all the more recent authorities, William of Malmesbury, Simeon of Durham, Matthew of Westminster, and above all Thorne, in his Chronicle of the Abbey of St. Augustin at Canterbury. Cf Lappenberg, i. 239, and Thomas of Elmham, who gives a very detailed version, pp. 209 to 239 of the new edition issued by Hardwicke.

[61] "In aula regia, sub regia cathedra." — Matth. Westmonast., p. 14.

[62] See their part in the history of Wilfrid, p. 344.

the savage and unconquerable Penda.[63] This ransom of blood was to take the form of a territorial gift for the foundation of a monastery in which virgins consecrated to God should forever supplicate divine pardon. Domneva asked for as much land as a tame doe which belonged to her, could run round in one course. The spot was the island of Thanet, at the mouth of the Thames, where their ancestor Hengis, and, two centuries later, St. Augustin had landed; and which was doubly dear to the nation as the place at which the Saxon occupation began and Christianity first appeared among them. It was, besides, a very fertile spot, the flower and jewel of the country, a sort of terrestrial paradise.[64] King Egbert consented to this arrangement, and the parties met on the ground. The doe was let loose, and the king and his court followed it with their eyes, when the villain Thunnor arrived, crying out that Domneva was a witch, who had bewitched the king to make him give up his fair lands to the instinct of a brute. Then, being on horseback, he pursued the doe to stop her; but in his wild career he came to a well, in which he was drowned, and which has ever since been called *Thunnor's leap*.[65] The doe's course included forty-two plough-lands: she crossed the island in two different directions before returning to her mistress. The land thus marked out was given over to Domneva and her spiritual posterity. Archbishop Theodore immediately consecrated the new foundation, which took the name of *Minster*, as who should say *The* Monastery.[66]

The course of the doe in the island of Thanet.

Domneva became a widow, and taking then the name of

[63] See genealogical tables, Appendix, VII. and VIII., pp. 754, 755.

[64] "Post sororem eorum Dompnenam misit, ut ipsa interfectionis pretium reciperet. . . . Venit rex tristis, veniam petiit. . . . Respondit Dompnena: Quantum cerva mea domestica uno impetu percurrere poterit. . . . Emissa cerva currit velociter, aspiciente rege cum suis hilari vultu cursum cervæ. . . . Insula arridens bona rerum copia, regni flos et thalamus . . . in qua tanquam quodam Elysio. . . . Clamavit Dompnenam incantatricem, et insipientem regem qui terram fertilem et nobilem bruti animalis indicio tradidit."

[65] The situation of the well and the whole direction of the doe's course may be found in the old and curious map of the Isle of Thanet, which has been republished in miniature in Dugdale's *Monasticon* (i. 84), and by the Bollandists (vol. iv. of July, p. 513), but the exact fac-simile of which is found in the new edition of Elmham.

[66] This monastery, like all the English ones, was destroyed by the Danes, and rebuilt under the Normans. There still remains a large and beautiful church, newly restored. It is supposed that some remains of Domneva's original building can be traced in a portion of the tower of this church, built of large stones and Roman tiles. — *Gentleman's Magazine*, July, 1862.

Ermenberga,[67] was the first abbess of the new community, which was soon occupied by seventy nuns. But she soon gave up the government to her daughter Mildred, whom she had sent into France, to Chelles, to receive a literary and religious education. The Abbess of Chelles, far from encouraging the young princess to embrace monastic life, employed every kind of threat and ill-usage to compel her to marry one of her relatives: thus at least says the legend, which is too singular, and too different in this point from all similar narratives, not to have a certain authenticity. But Mildred resisted the temptation victoriously. She returned to England to govern the abbey founded by her mother, and to give an example of all the monastic virtues to her seventy companions. Very few details of her life have been preserved: which makes the extraordinary and prolonged popularity which has attached to her name, her relics, and everything belonging to her, all the more wonderful. Her popularity eclipsed that of St. Augustin even in the district which he first won to the faith, and to such a point that the rock which had received the mark of his first footstep,[68] and which lies a little to the east of Minster, took and retained up to the eighteenth century the name of St. Mildred's Rock.

Great popularity of Mildred.

An entire chapter would be necessary to narrate the violent struggles, the visions, and other incidents which are connected with the history of her relics, and what hagiographers call her posthumous fame. Her name, like that of many other Anglo-Saxon nuns, has once more become fashionable in our days, but it recalls to our ungrateful contemporaries nothing but the vague poetry of the past. It was mixed up with the real history of the Danes and Normans, of Canute the Great, of Edward the Confessor, of Lanfranc, of Edward I., the terrible victor of the Scots and Welsh.[69] The worship of Mildred appears interspersed in the midst of all these personages with every kind of edifying and amusing anecdote, such as touch the most delicate and the most diverse chords of the human heart. By the side of the touching scene in which the persecuted wife of

[67] According to another version she was called Ermenberga before she became abbess, and only then assumed the name of *Domna Ebba*, or Domneva. — Bolland., vol. viii. Oct., p. 91.

[68] See above, p. 152. Cf. Stanley, *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*.

[69] Bolland., *loc. cit.* Cf. Oakley, *Life of St. Augustin*, p. 134.

Edward the Confessor, forsaken by all, is consoled by the apparition of Mildred — and the story of the solemn translation of her relics by Archbishop Lanfranc — are found grotesque incidents, such as that of the bell-ringer who, while asleep before her shrine, was woke by a box on the ear administered by the holy princess, who said to him, "This is the oratory and not the dormitory."[70] In that wonderful efflorescence of imagination quickened by faith which for several centuries was interwoven with all Christian society, the legend had something for all — for crowned heads and common people, and could at the same time move its audience to laugh or to weep. Let us return to history by adding that William the Conqueror, when he became master of England, formally respected the right of asylum claimed by criminals at the place where the relics of Mildred lay; for, while destroying the Anglo-Saxon crown, he took great care to aim no blow at the persevering devotion shown by his new subjects for the saints of both sexes who had proceeded from their national dynasties.

The sisters of Mildred.

Mildred had two sisters, whose names are connected with hers by that eccentric taste for alliteration which characterizes the Anglo-Saxons. Their names were Milburga and Milgytha; they were both nuns like their sister, their mother, their three aunts, their grandaunt Eanswida, and their great-grandaunts Ethelburga and Eadburga.[71] We are now at the fourth generation of the descendants of the first Christian king, and we may well say with Mabillon: *Puellarum regiarum, quibus idem animus fuit, numerus iniri vix potest.*[72] The three daughters of the foundress of Minster were compared to Faith, Hope, and Charity.[73] Nothing is known of Milgytha except that she was a nun at Canterbury.[74] As for Milburga, she was consecrated by the Archbishop Theodore abbess of a monastery founded beyond the Severn, upon the borders of Anglo-Saxon territory and the land still held by the Celts of Cambria. Like Mildred, she has furnished

Milburga.

[70] "Inæstimabili decore fulgida . . . elata palma, alapam ei dedit, docens oratorium, non dormitorium, ibi esse." — Bolland., vol. iv. July, p. 518.

[71] See genealogical table, Appendix. VII., p. 755.

[72] *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, sæc. iii. 1, p. 40.

[73] "Nomina similllima, par formarum gloria . . . mens at amor et sanctitas trium erat unica. Hinc Milburga, ut fides, inde Milgytha, ut spes, media coruscat Mildretha, ut caritas." — Bolland., *loc. cit.*, p. 516.

[74] Bolland., vol. ii. January, p. 176.

more than one expressive incident to monastic legends. The young abbess was exposed, like so many of her fellows, to the pursuit of a neighboring prince, who, being determined to marry her, attempted to seize her person by force. s she fled before the sacrilegious band, a river which ad just crossed rose all at once into flood, so as to pla an insurmountable barrier in the way of the too eager suitor, who thereupon gave up the pursuit. Another miracle, attributed to her, recalls the most touching of those which are mentioned in the life of Wilfrid. A poor widow came to her one day when she was alone in her oratory, and, throwing herself on her knees, besought her with tears to raise up her dead child, whose poor little body she had brought with her. Milburga asked if she were mad. "Go," she said, "bury your son, and prepare to die, in your turn, like him; for we are all born but to die." "No, no," said the widow, "I will not leave you till you have restored to me my son alive." The abbess then prayed by the little corpse, and all at once she appeared to the poor mother surrounded by a flame which descended from heaven, the living emblem of the fervor of her prayer. An instant after, life came back to the child. When Milburga had reached the end of her own days, which were fragrant with charity and purity, she gathered all her community around her deathbed. "Beloved sisters," she said, "I have always loved you as my own soul, and I have watched over you like a mother. I have now come to the end of my pilgrimage; I leave you to God and to the blessed Virgin Mary." With which words she died. Four hundred years after her death her monastery, which had been destroyed by the Danes, was re-established by a colony of monks from Cluny. While they were building the church, a heavenly fragrance betrayed the place of Milburga's burial. Her relics were exposed to public veneration, and an innumerable crowd hastened to visit them — old and young, rich and poor, rivalling each other in the pilgrimage. All the surrounding country was covered by a tide of pilgrims: so great, notwithstanding the double invasion of Danes and Normans and the passage of centuries, was the fidelity of the English people to the memory of the first saints of their race.[75]

And the dead child.

23d Feb., 722.

[75] "Non a te recedam, nisi prolem meam restituas vivam. . . . Vos hactenus, dilectissimæ sorores, sicut animæ meæ viscera dilexi." — CAPGRAVE, ap. BOLLAND., vol. iii. February, p. 390. "Vix patuli campi capiebant ag-

These three sisters were grandchildren of the savage Penda.

In order not to separate the three sisters from their mother, we have introduced them after the holy nuns of the dynasty of Hengist and Ethelbert, from whom they were descended by the mother's side. But by their father, who belonged to the reigning family of Mercia, they were the granddaughters of Penda, the most terrible enemy of the Christian name.[76]

The Mercian dynasty, descended from Penda, furnishes most of the saints.

In fact, a transformation far more sudden and not less complete than that which turned the granddaughters of the *Ravager* and *Man of Fire* into abbesses and saints, was wrought upon the posterity of the ferocious Penda of Mercia, the warlike octogenarian, who had been the last and most formidable hero of Anglo-Saxon paganism.[77] Of all the races descended from Odin who shared among them the sway of England, no one has furnished a larger list of nuns and saints to be inscribed in the national calendar than the descendants of Penda, as if they thus meant to pay a generous ransom for the calamities inflicted upon the new Christians of England by their most cruel enemy.[78] We will not return again to speak of his firstborn son, whose love for the daughter of Oswy made him the firstborn son of the Church in Mercia, the first Christian baptized in that country;[79] nor of his first successor Wulphere, the generous founder of Peterborough; nor of his other successor Ethelred, the devoted friend of Wilfrid, who ended his thirty years' reign by ten years of life in a monastery. We treat only at this moment of the daughters and granddaughters of the sanguinary victor who had cut off so many Christian kings among the neighboring nations.

An obstinate tradition found in the ancient English chronicles asserts that two of his daughters, Kyneburga and Kyneswitha, both gave up the thought of marriage to consecrate themselves to God. The eldest, who was married to the intimate friend of her brother Peada, the eldest son of King Oswy of Northumbria, the friend and first protector of Wilfrid,[80] is said to have left him with his consent to end her life in the cloister. The youngest, sought in marriage by

mina viatorum . . . cunctos in commune præcipitante fide." — Guill. Malmesb., *De Gest. Reg.*, lib. ii. c. 13.

[76] See genealogical table, Appendix VIII., p. 755.

[77] See pp. 225–514.

[78] "Ita parens perpetuo in Deum rebellis sanctissimos cœlo fructus effudit." — Thomas de Elmham, p. 189.

[79] See p. 294.

[80] See p. 293.

Offa, King of the East Saxons, used her connection with him only to persuade the young prince to embrace monastic life as she herself wished to do.[81] A more profound study, however, of the period has made the authenticity of this legend doubtful.[82] But it has proved that the two daughters of the bloody Penda contributed, with their brothers, to the establishment of the great Abbey of Medehampstede or Peterborough; that their names appear in the lists of the national assembly which sanctioned this foundation, and that they spent their retired and virginal lives in some retreat near the new sanctuary. After their death, they were buried at Peterborough; their relics, happily found after the burning of the monastery and the massacre of all the monks by the Danes, were carried back there on its restoration, and continued to be venerated there down to the twelfth century.

A third daughter of the terrible Penda, Eadburga, was also a nun, and became abbess at Dormuncester, according to the English martyrology. Her son Merwald, who did not reign, like his brothers, and never attained a higher rank than that of *subregulus* or ealdorman, married her who was afterwards Abbess of Minster, a union from which sprang the three holy sisters Milburga, Mildred, and Milgytha, whom we have just spoken of. Another son, Wulphere, who succeeded Penda on the throne of Mercia, had a saint for his wife, and of this marriage proceeded another holy saint, Wereburga, who was the fourth of the granddaughters of Penda whom grateful England placed upon her altars.

The wife of Wulphere, the son and successor of Penda, was Ermenilda, daughter of the King of Kent, and granddaughter, by her mother, of Anna, the King of East Anglia, who perished upon the battle-field defending his country and religion against the attacks of Penda.[83] This religion, henceforward triumphant, reconciled and united the posterity of the murderer and that of the victim. We thus come, through the essentially Christian and monastic dynasty of the Ascings of Kent to that of the Uffings of East Anglia, which was equally remarkable

The Uffings or dynasty of East Anglia.

[81] Guill. Malmesb., Ricard. Cirencester, Alford, Harpsfeld, Capgrave, &c. Pagi accepts this tradition: *Crit. in Baronium*, ad ann. 680.

[82] *Act. SS. Bolland.*, vol. i. March, p. 441. It is not known by what authority the author of the continuation of Dugdale makes Kyneburga the first abbess of the great monastery at Gloucester, the church of which, now a cathedral, is one of the most curious buildings in England. — Stevens, i. 266.

[83] See above, p. 282.

for the crowd of saints which it produced. King Anna, who married the sister of Hilda, the celebrated Abbess of Whitby, had a natural daughter, who was a nun in France, along with the daughter, by a former marriage, of her father's wife; both, as has been already said, were Abbesses of Faremoutier,[84] and both are reckoned among the saints.

The three daughters of King Anna, who died on the battle-field.

By his union with the sister of Hilda, King Anna had three daughters and a son. The son became in his turn the father of three daughters, two of whom were in succession Abbesses of the Monastery of Hackness, in Northumbria, founded by their grand-aunt St. Hilda, and the last, Eadburga, was that Abbess of Repton whom we have already encountered as the friend of the illustrious and generous hermit Guthlac.[85]

The three daughters of Anna — Etheldreda, Sexburga, and Withburga — are all counted among the saints. Let us speak, in the first place, of the latter, though she was the youngest of the three. She was sent to the country to be nursed, and remained there until she heard, while still quite young, the news of her father's death on the battle-field. She resolved immediately to seek a refuge for the rest of her life in cloistral virginity. She chose for her asylum a modest remnant of her father's lands at Dereham in Norfolk, and there built a little monastery. But she was so poor that she, her companions, and the masons who built her future dwelling, had to live on dry bread alone. One day, after she had prayed long to the blessed Virgin, she saw two does come out of the neighboring forest to drink at a stream whose pure current watered the secluded spot. Their udders were heavy with milk, and they permitted themselves to be milked by the virginal hands of Withburga's companions, returning every day to the same place, and thus furnishing a sufficient supply for the nourishment of the little community and its workmen.[86] This lasted until the ranger of the royal domain,

[84] See above, p. 663, and the genealogical table, Appendix IX., p. 756.

[85] See above, p. 588.

[86] "Juxta mare cum sua nutrice in quodam vico paterni juris. Ad sanctimonialem confugit professionem, ubi in umbra alarum Dei sperans suaviter requievit. . . . In humilem locum paterni juris devenit. . . . Mittit ad fontem quo silva grato irrigatur fluvio. . . . Duæ assiliunt cervæ. . . . Has mulgebant manus virgineæ. . . . Præpositus ipsius villæ . . . adductis canibus nitebatur insontes feras captare." — Bolland., vol. ii. March, p. 606.

There still exists at East Dereham, a small parish in Norfolk, a well bearing the name of St. Withburga. It is fed by a spring rising in the very place where the saint's body was laid before its translation to Ely. — *Notes and Queries*, third series, vol. iii. p. 247.

a savage and wicked man, who regarded with an evil eye the rising house of God, undertook to hunt down the two helpful animals. He pursued them with his dogs across the country, but, in attempting to leap a high hedge, with that bold impetuosity which still characterizes English horsemen, his horse was impaled on a post, and the hunter broke his neck.[87]

Withburga ended her life in this poor and humble solitude; but the fragrance of her gentle virtues spread far and wide. The fame of her holiness went through all the surrounding country. The worship given to her by the people of Norfolk was maintained with the pertinacity common to the Anglo-Saxon race, and went so far that, two centuries after her death, they armed themselves to defend her relics from the monks of Ely, who came, by the king's command, to unite them to those of her sisters at Ely.

Three generations of saints of the blood of Odin Abbesses at Ely.

To Ely, also, the monastic metropolis of East Anglia, and queen of English abbeys, we must transport ourselves to contemplate three generations of princesses issued from the blood of the Uffings and Ascings, and crowned by the nimbus of saints. There were, in the first place, the two Queens of Mercia and Kent, Etheldreda, whom our readers already know,[88] and her elder sister, Sexburga. This accomplished princess had married one of the Kings of Kent, the one who, after Ethelbert, had showed himself most zealous for the extension of the Gospel. It was she especially who moved him to destroy the last idols which still remained in his kingdom. After twenty-four years of conjugal life she became a widow, and was regent for four years of the kingdom of her son. As soon as he was old enough to reign, she abdicated, not only the crown, but secular life, took the veil from the hands of Archbishop Theodore, and founded a monastery in the Isle of Sheppey, situated at the mouth of the Thames, and separated from the mainland by that arm of the sea in which Augustin, on Christmas-day 579, baptized at once ten thousand Saxons. This monastery took and kept the name of *Minster*, like that which was founded at the same time by her niece Domneva

Sexburga, Queen of Kent.

640-664.

[87] The monastic chronicler describes the accident with all the spirit of a steeplechaser: "Equus in obstantem sepem urgentibus calcaribus incurrit, secusque acuta sude transfixus ilia, dum resiliendo tergiversaretur, sessor superbus supino capite excutitur, fractaque cervice exanimatur."

[88] See above, in the life of Wilfrid, p. 366.

in the neighboring Isle of Thanet. The church is still visible not far from the great roads of Sheerness, which has become one of the principal stations of the British navy. She there ruled a community of seventy-seven nuns, until she learned that her sister Etheldreda, having fled from the king her husband, according to the advice of Wilfrid, had taken refuge in the marshes of their native country, and had there formed a new asylum for souls resolute to serve God in solitude and virginity. Sexburga then resolved to return to her own country and become a simple nun under the crosier of her sister. "Farewell, my daughters," she said to her companions who were gathered round her. "I leave you Jesus for your protector, His holy angels for companions, and one of my daughters for your superior. . . . I go to East Anglia where I was born, in order to have my glorious sister Etheldreda for my mistress, and to take part immediately in her labors here below, that I may share her recompense above."

Abbess at Ely after her sister.

She was received with enthusiasm at Ely: the entire community came out to welcome her: and the two sister-queens wept with joy when they met. They lived together afterwards in the most sweet and tender union, rivalling each other in zeal for the service of God and the salvation of souls, Sexburga compelling herself always to take lessons of humility and fervor from her sister. When Etheldreda died, Sexburga replaced her as abbess, and ruled the great East Anglian monastery for twenty years before she too found her rest near the tomb which she had erected to her sister.[89]

679.

6th July, 699.

Besides her two sons, who reigned over Kent in succession, Sexburga had two daughters, one of whom, Earcongotha, lived and died, as has been already seen, in a French monastery; the other, Ermenilda, married to the son and successor of Penda, became, along with the illustrious exile Wilfrid, the principal instrument of the final conversion of Mercia, the greatest kingdom of the Heptarchy. Like her mother, she used all the

Ermenilda, Queen of Mercia, Abbess of Ely after her mother.

[89] "Vobis, O filiæ, Jesum derelinquo tutorem, sanctosque angelos paranymphos. . . . Ego gloriosæ sororis meæ magisterio informanda. . . . Regina reginam excepit, soror sororem cum tripudio introducit, fundunt ubertim præ gaudio lacrymas, et ex vera caritate inter eas lætitia germinatur. Cœlesti namque dulcedine delectatæ alterna invicem consolatione proficiunt. Venit dives illa de prælatione ad subjectionem. . . . Federatæ invicem beatæ sorores in unitate fidei." — *Historia Eliensis*, l. i. c. 18, 35.

influence which the love of her husband gave her to extirpate the last vestiges of idolatry in the country which had been the centre and last bulwark of Anglo-Saxon heathenism.[90] The example of her virtues was the most effectual of sermons; and it was, above all, by her incomparable sweetness, her pity for all misfortune, her unwearied kindness, that she touched the hearts of her subjects most.[91] Like her mother, too, it was her desire to offer herself entirely to God, to whom she had finally led back her people: as soon as she became a widow, she took the veil like her mother, and under her mother — for it was to Ely that she went to live in humility and chastity, under a doubly maternal rule. The mother and daughter contended which should give the finest examples of humility and charity.[92] At last, and still following in her mother's steps, Ermenilda, on the death of Sexburga, became abbess, and was thus the third princess of the blood of the Uffings who ruled the flourishing community of Ely. The local chronicle affirms that it was not her birth but her virtues, and even her love of holy poverty, which made her preferred to all others by the unanimous suffrages of her numerous companions.[93] She showed herself worthy of their choice: she was less a superior than a mother. After a life full of holiness and justice, her soul went to receive its eternal reward in heaven, and her body was buried beside those of her mother and aunt in the church of the great abbey which had thus the singular privilege of having for its three first abbesses a Queen of Northumbria, a Queen of Kent, and a Queen of Mercia.

Werburga, daughter of Ermenilda, fourth Ab-

But this celebrated community was to be in addition the spiritual home of a fourth abbess and saint, in whom the blood of Penda and of Anna,[94] the victor

[90] "Nec quievit invicta, donec idola et ritus dæmoniacos extirparet. . . . Rex . . . sanctis uxoris desideriis, petitionibus ac monitis ultro se inclinans." — JOANN. BROMPTON, ap. BOLLAND., vol. ii. February, p. 687. See above, p. 631.

[91] "Ad omnem pietatem, compassionem et omnium necessitudinum subventionem materna viscera ante omnia induebat. Eadem in omnibus benignitas, in Christo caritas erat." — *Ibid.*, p. 691.

[92] "Contendebant alterutra pietate mater et filia, quæ humilior, quæ possit esse subjectior: mater sibi præferebat ejus, quam genuerat, virginitatem; virgo matris auctoritatem: utrinque et vincere et vinci gaudebant." — GOSELINUS, *Vita S. Wereburgæ*, ap. BOLLAND., vol. i. February, p. 388.

[93] "Voto unanimi et consensu totius congregationis . . . successit: quæ totius dominationis ambitione neglecta . . . ad Christi paupertatem, quam optaverat, pauper ipsa devenit. . . . A cunctis digne suscepta, totius mater congregationis effecta est. Transivit autem plena sanctitate et justitia ad regna cœlestia."

[94] See genealogical tables, Appendix VII., VIII., and IX., pp. 754, 755, 756.

Abbess of Ely, of the same stock.

and the vanquished, was blended. This was Wereburga, the only daughter of Ermenilda, who had not followed, but preceded, her mother in the cloister.

These crowned Christians had learned in their palaces to despise wealth, luxury, and worldly pomp. They considered themselves prisoners of vanity.[95] Notwithstanding her beauty, which, like that of Etheldreda, is boasted by the annalists, Wereburga repulsed all her suitors. A monastery seemed to her the most noble of palaces. Following this impulse she went to her grandaunt Etheldreda at Ely, with the consent of her father, who himself took her there in state, accompanied by his royal suite. When her grandmother, Queen Sexburga, and her mother, Queen Ermenilda, followed her, three generations of princesses of the blood of Hengist and Odin were thus seen together, the grandmother, mother, and daughter, wearing the same monastic dress, and bound by the same rule for the service of God and man. Wereburga lived long as a humble and simple nun, fulfilling in her turn all the offices in the monastery, until the time when, after the death of her mother, she was called to take the place of abbess.

699.

Her uncle Ethelred, who, after a reign of thirty years, was to end his days in the cloister, was so struck with the prudence and capacity that were apparent, combined with holiness, in the character of Wereburga, that he intrusted her with a sort of supremacy, or rather a general right of inspection over the various nunneries in his kingdom.[96] It was in exercise of this office that, before entering on the government of Ely, she had been at the head of the communities of Weedon, Trentham, and Hanbury in turn, leaving everywhere a fragrance of virtue and kindness, and recollections of her constant solicitude for the benefit of all, which made her memory dear to the people, and of which as usual legendary lore has taken possession. Of all the incidents that adorn her biography we will quote one only, which explains better

[95] "Viluerant divitiæ tam matri quam filiæ: palatium habebant pro monasterio: aurum, gemmæ, vestes auro textæ, et quicquid fert pompatica mundi jactantia onerosa sibi magis erant quam gloriosa: et si forte his uti ad tempus regia compelleret dignitas, dolebant se potius vanitatis subjectas tanquam captivas." — *Act. SS. Bolland.*, Febr., vol. i. p. 387.

[96] "Cum formæ pulchritudo insigniter responderet, generositati suæ, cœpit speciosa facie cum speciosissima mente ad eum . . . contendere. . . . Procos et amatores regificos angelica pudicitia repulit. . . . Virginalis B. Wereburgæ pudicitia, mox ut valuit, hæc vincula exuit. . . . Tradidit ei monasteriorum sanctimonialium quæ in suo regno pollebant principatum." — BOLLAND., vol. i. February, pp. 387, 388.

than any other the popularity of her memory. It happened one day that a shepherd on the monastic lands of Weedon, a man distinguished by his holy life, was treated by the steward with that savage brutality which the modern English too often borrow from their Anglo-Saxon ancestors. At this sight the niece of the sovereign of Mercia, the granddaughter of the terrible Penda, threw herself at the feet of the cruel steward. "For the love of God," she said, "spare this innocent man; he is more pleasing in the eyes of God, who from the heights of heaven regards all our actions, than either you or I." The wretch paid no attention to her, and she began to pray, continuing until the steward, paralyzed and distorted by miraculous strength, had in his turn to appeal to the intervention of the saint that he might be restored to his natural condition.[97]

At the death of Wereburga the population in the neighborhood of the monastery where she died and where she was to be buried, fought for the possession of her body, an event which began to be customary at the death of our holy nuns. Two centuries later, in order to save her dear remains from the Danes, the *Ealdorman* of Mercia had them carried to Chester, a city already celebrated in the times of the Britons and Romans, and where a great abbey, with a church which is now admired among the fine cathedrals of England, rose over her tomb.

Nuns of the race of Cerdic in Wessex.

To complete this list of Anglo-Saxon princesses whose cloistral education and vocation have been revealed to us by the worship of which they were the object, it now remains to say a few words of the nuns who proceeded from the race which a century later was to absorb all the kingdoms of the Heptarchy, and form the political unity of England. This race of Cerdic, the founder of the kingdom of Wessex, has already given us an essentially monastic figure in the person of the legislator King Ina,[98] who, in the midst of a prosperous and glorious reign, gave up his crown and went to Rome to become a monk. It was his wife Ethelburga, as may be remembered, who, by a scene cleverly arranged, prepared him to leave his kingdom, his

[97] "Amentarius, vir piæ conversationis et quantum licuit sub humana servitute sanctæ vitæ. . . . Nunc villicus dominæ cum forte laniaret cruentissimo verbere . . . prorui ad pedes indignos lanistæ. . . . Parce, pro Dei amore, quare excarnificas hominem innocentem. . . . Continuo dura cervix et torva facies in terga illi reflectitur." — *Ibid.*, p. 389.

[98] See above, p. 592, and the genealogical table, Appendix X., p. 757.

country, and the world. She alone never left him; she accompanied him in his voluntary exile, and at his death returned to become a nun at Barking, in England.

St. Cuthburga, sister of King Ina.

Beside the wife of Ina, and, like her, of the blood of Cerdic,[99] the two sisters of the king, Coenburga[100] and Cuthburga, take their place in monastic annals, both devoted to religious life, and reckoned among the English saints. The latter is much the most celebrated of the two. She was married young to the learned and peaceful Aldfrid, King of Northumbria, whose important influence on the life of Wilfrid has been already seen, and was, like her sister-in-law Etheldreda, struck upon the throne by the thunderbolt of divine love, and in the lifetime of her husband desired to give up conjugal life and her royal state to consecrate herself to the service of God in the cloister. Less tender or less violent than his brother Egfrid, King Aldfrid consented to the separation,[101] and Cuthburga took the veil in the Monastery of Barking, on the Thames, in the kingdom of East Anglia. This house, which had been founded some time before by a holy bishop of London for his sister, in whom he had recognized a soul destined to govern those who gave themselves to God,[102] was already celebrated, not only for the fervor of its nuns, but by the zeal they displayed for the study of the Holy Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, and even the classic tongues. The sister of Ina remained there only a few years. Her brother desired her to become the superior of a great foundation belonging to their race and country. He established her at Winbourne, in a very fertile country,[103]

700-705.

Foundress of Winbourne. 705.

[99] "Regii generis femina de Cerdici prosapia regis oriunda." — Guill. Malmesb.

[100] Placed by the Bollandists (vol. iv. Sept., die 12) among the *prætermissi*, because her adoration does not appear to them certain, though she is named in a crowd of martyrologies. Cf. Pagi, *Crit. in Annal.* Baronii, ad ann. 705.

[101] "Ante finem vitæ suæ connubio carnalis copulæ ambo pro Dei amore renunciavere." — Florent. Wigornensis. Cf. Bolland., vol. vi. August, p. 696.

[102] "In quo ipsa Deo devotarum mater ac nutrix posset existere feminarum, quæ suscepto monasterii regimine, condignam se in omnibus episcopo fratre, et ipsa recte vivendo et subjectis regulariter et pie consulendo præbuit." — Bede, iv. 6. This bishop was called Earconwald, and his sister Edilberga or Ethelburga. She must not be confounded with the widow of King Ina, who afterwards was a nun, and even abbess at Barking. The bishop himself became a monk at Chertsey, another monastery also founded by him on the banks of the Thames.

[103] "Quod Latine interpretatur *vini fons* dici potest, quia propter nimiam

near the royal residence of the kings of Wessex, and not far from the sea which washes the shores of the district now called Dorsetshire. The Queen of Northumbria, when she became abbess of the new community, carried with her the spirit and habits of her first monastic dwelling-place, and Winbourne soon became still more celebrated than Barking for the great development of its literary studies.

Frideswida, a West Saxon princess, becomes a nun in spite of the opposition of her friends; and her monastery is the cradle of the University of Oxford.

But before we discuss briefly the singular birth of ecclesiastical and classical literature among the Anglo-Saxon nuns, and before we leave the country of Wessex, which gave to the English their first monarch, Egbert, and to the Teutonic world its most illustrious apostle, Boniface, a place must be reserved for the touching and popular story of Frideswida, foundress and patron of Oxford — that is to say, of one of the most celebrated literary and intellectual centres of the universe. She was the daughter of one of the great chiefs of the country, to whom the legend gives the title of king, or at least of *subregulus*, and was, like all the heroines of Anglo-Saxon legend, sought in marriage by another king or chief called Algar, more powerful than her father, whose alliance she obstinately refused in order to consecrate herself to religious life. The prince, carried away by his passion, resolved to seize on her by force. To escape from his pursuit she threw herself, like Bega, into a boat, not to cross the sea, like the Irish princess, but to put the Thames between herself and her lover. After proceeding for ten miles on the river, she landed on the borders of a forest, where she hid herself in a sort of hut covered with ivy, but intended in the first place for the swine which, then as later, went to eat the acorns in the woods, and were one of the principal riches of the Anglo-Saxon proprietors.[104] It was not a secure refuge for her. Algar, growing more and more in earnest, tracked her everywhere, with the intention of sacrificing her to the brutality of his companions as well as to his own. But at the moment when, exhausted with weariness, she was about to fall into his hands, she bethought herself of the great saints who, from the earliest days of the Church, had defended and saved their virginity at the price of their life. She invoked Catherine,

claritatem et saporem eximium quo cæteris terræ illius aquis præstare videbatur, hoc nomen accepit." — Rodolphi, *Vita S. Liobæ*, ap. *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, sæc. iii. p. 2.

[104] See the first chapter of *Ivanhoe*.

the most illustrious martyr of the Eastern Church, and Cecilia, the sweet and heroic Roman whose name, inserted in the canon of the mass, was already familiar to all the new Christians. Her prayer was granted. God struck the savage Anglo-Saxon with sudden blindness, which put an end to his furious pursuit.

From this incident sprang a wild but obstinate tradition, according to which the kings of England for several centuries carefully avoided living or even passing by Oxford, for fear of losing their eyesight.[105] Frideswida, thus miraculously saved, obtained by her prayers the restoration of sight to her persecutor; then, with her father's consent, and after some years passed in solitude, she founded near Oxford, at the spot of her deliverance, a monastery where a crowd of Saxon virgins ranged themselves under her authority, and where she ended her life, dying in the same year as the Venerable Bede, and consoled during her last sufferings by the apparition of the two virgin martyrs, St. Catherine and St. Cecilia, to whom she had once so successfully appealed.

735.

The tomb of Frideswida, the chapel she erected in the depth of the wood where she had hidden herself, the fountain which sprang at her prayer, attracted up to the thirteenth century a crowd of pilgrims, who were led thither by the fame of the miraculous cures there performed. But of all the miracles collected after her death, none is so touching as that which, told during her lifetime, contributed above everything else to increase the fame of sanctity with which she was soon surrounded. It happened one day that an unfortunate young man, struck with leprosy, met her on the road: from the moment that he perceived her he cried, "I conjure you, virgin Frideswida, by the Almighty God, to kiss me in the name of Jesus Christ, His only Son." The maiden, overcoming the horror felt by all of this fearful disease, approached him, and after having made the sign of the cross, she touched his lips with a sisterly kiss.

She kisses a young leper.

[105] "In derelicto porcorum mapali hædera obducto delituit. . . . Nec latibulum latere potuit amantem, nec cordis desidia obfuit, quin persequeretur fugitantem. . . . Ille vi agere intendit. . . . Leonum ludibrio polluenda. . . . Puella jam de fuga desperans simulque pro lassitudine nusquam progredi potens. . . . Hinc innatus est horror regibus Angliæ, ut nec unus profecto successorum ejus Oxenfordiam præsumatur intrare." — LELAND, *Collectanea*, ap. DUGDALE, vol. i. p. 173. Cf. BOLLAND., vol. viii. Oct., pp. 533–568. Henry III. was the first English king who disregarded this prejudice, and the misfortunes of his reign have been attributed to this presumption.

Soon after the scales of his leprosy fell off, and his body became fresh and wholesome like that of a little child.[105]

The church in which the body of Frideswida rests, and the monastery which she had founded, were the objects of public veneration and the gifts of many kings during the middle ages. It would occupy too much of our space to tell how this monastery passed into the hands of regular canons, and became one of the cradles of the celebrated University of Oxford. Unquestionably the first school which is proved to have existed on this spot, destined to so much literary fame, was attached to the sanctuary of our Anglo-Saxon princess.[107] Oxford and Westminster,[108] the two greatest names in the intellectual and social history of England, thus both date from the monastic origin in which is rooted everything which was dear and sacred to old England.

The monastery of St. Frideswida, transformed into a college by Cardinal Wolsey, is still, under the name of *Christ-Church*, the most considerable college in the University of Oxford. Her church, rebuilt in the twelfth century, is the cathedral of that city.[109] Her body, according to the common opinion, still rests there, and her shrine is shown; but it must be added that, under Elizabeth, and after the final triumph of Anglican reform, a commissioner of the Queen, who has himself related the fact in an official report, believed himself entitled to place beside the relics of Frideswida the body of a disveiled nun married to an apostate priest called Pietro Vermigli, who had been called to Oxford as a reformer and professor of the new doctrine. The commissioner mixed the bones of the saint and those of the concubine in such a manner that it was impossible to distinguish the one from the other, and placed them in a stone coffin, on which he engraved the words, now happily effaced, *Hic requiescit religio cum superstitione.*[110]

[106] "Ecce inter turbam . . . adest juvenis immanissima lepra et postulis toto deformatus (*sic*) corpore. . . . Adjuro te, virgo Frideswida, per Deum omnipotentem, ut des mihi osculum. . . . At illa caritatis igne succensa illico accessit. . . . Ore virginis os leprosi tangitur, et . . . statim caro ejus sicut caro parvuli efficitur." — Bolland., vol. viii. Oct., p. 565.

[107] Ozanam, *Notes Inédites sur l'Angleterre.*

[108] See above, p. 193.

[109] The choir, with its superimposed arches, is specially admirable, as well as the tomb of Guitmond, first prior of the restored monastery in 1549, that of Sir Henry de Bath, Chief-Justice of England in 1251, and the graceful chapter-house of the thirteenth century. At Christ-Church resides the celebrated Dr. Pusey, canon of the cathedral.

[110] See the learned and copious article of P. Bossue on St. Frideswida, ap. Bolland., vol. viii. Oct., p. 553–556.

III.

It may be a matter of surprise that there is nothing in the legend of St. Frideswida, nor in the recollections of the early days of her foundation, to connect them with the incontestable traditions which prove the intellectual and literary development of the great nunneries in England, of which something has already been said. We return to the subject, were it only in passing, reserving to ourselves the power of going back upon it when it becomes time to discuss the colonies of learned nuns who, issuing from their insular beehives, lent effectual aid to St. Boniface and the other Anglo-Saxon missionaries of Germany.

It is proved by numerous and undoubted witnesses that literary studies were cultivated during the seventh and eighth centuries in the female monasteries with no less care and perseverance than in the communities of men, and even perhaps with more enthusiasm. Was this, as has been supposed, a consequence of the new spirit which Archbishop Theodore had brought from Greece and Italy, and with which he had inspired all the monastic Church of England? or was it rather a tradition of Frankish Gaul, where the first Anglo-Saxon nuns had been educated, and where the example of Radegund and her companions shows us to what a degree classical habits and recollections found an echo in cloisters inhabited by women alone? [111]

At all events it is apparent that the Anglo-Saxon nuns interpreted the obligation to work which was imposed on them by their rule, to occupy the time which remained after the performance of their liturgical duties, as applying specially to study. They did not neglect the occupations proper to their sex, as is apparent by the example of the priestly vestments embroidered for Cuthbert by the abbess-queen Etheldreda. They even improved the art of embroidery in gold and silver stuffs, ornamented with pearls and jewels, for the use of the clergy and the church, so much, that the term "English work" (*opus Anglicum*) was long consecrated to this kind of labor. But the work of the hand was far from satisfying them. They left the distaff and the needle, not only to copy manuscripts and ornament them with miniatures, according to the taste of their time, but above all to read and

[111] See above, vol. i. p. 488.

study the holy books, the Fathers of the Church, and even classic authors. All, or almost all, knew Latin. Convent corresponded with convent in that language. Some of them became acquainted with Greek. Some were enthusiastic for poetry and grammar, and all that was then adorned with the name of science. Others devoted themselves more readily to the study of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the New Testament, taking for guides the commentaries of the ancient doctors, and seeking out historical, allegorical, or mystic interpretations for the most obscure texts.[112] It has been made apparent by what was said in respect to the cowherd Ceadmon, transformed into a poet and translator of Holy Scripture, to what extent the study of the Bible had been cultivated at Whitby under the reign of the great Abbess Hilda.[113]

Each community of women was thus at once a school and workshop, and no monastic foundation is to be met with which was not, for nuns as well as for monks, a house of education, in the first place for the adults, who formed its first nucleus, and afterwards for the young people who crowded around them.[114] Thus were trained the cultivated nuns who quoted Virgil in writing to St. Boniface, and too often added Latin verses, of their own fashion, to their prose;[115] who copied for him the works he had need of, now the Epistles of St. Peter in gilded letters, now the Prophets writ large to suit weak sight;[116] who consoled and nourished him in his exile by the abundance and beauty of the books they sent him; and among whom he found those illustrious fellow-workers, whom one of his biographers declares to have been deeply versed in all liberal studies,[117] and who lent so stout a hand in the conversion of the Germans.

Intellectual life at Barking under Abbess Hildelida.

But the example most frequently quoted is that of Barking, where we have seen the wife and sister of Ina, the Queen of Northumbria and the Queen of Wessex, take the veil in succession, the one during the lifetime, the other after the death of her

[112] MABILLON, *Annal. Bened.*, vol. ii. p. 143; LINGARD, *Antiquities*, vol. ii. p. 193; and especially KARL ZELL, who, in a recent work, *Lioba und die frommen Angelsachsischen Frauen* (Fribourg, 1860), has most conscientiously treated of all that regards the studies and the whole life of the Anglo-Saxon nuns.

[113] See above, p. 264.

[114] The following is said of St. Cuthbert's foundation at Carlisle (see above, p. 402): "Ubi sanctimonalium congregatione stabilita . . . in profectum divinæ servitutis scholas instituit." — SIMEON DUNELMENSIS, i. 9.

[115] S. BONIFACII ET LULLI *Epistolæ*, No. 13, 23, 148, 149; ed. Jaffé.

[116] *Ibid.*, No. 13, 32, 55.

[117] OTHLO, *De Vita et Virtutibus S. Bonifacii*, p. 490.

husband. The abbess of this convent was Hildelida, whose wise administration and holy life, prolonged to a very advanced age,[118] have been celebrated by Bede, and to whom her friendship with St. Aldhelm and St. Boniface gave additional fame. It was to her and her community that the famous Abbot of Malmesbury dedicated his *Praise of Virginity*, composed at first in prose, and which was rewritten in verse at a later period. In this dedication, he names, besides the Abbess and Queen Cuthburga, eight other nuns, who were bound to him by ties of blood or of intimate friendship, whose holy fame seemed to him an honor to the Church, and whose many and affectionate letters filled him with joy.[119]

This treatise, like all the other important writings of Aldhelm, is very uninviting to the reader, being full of pedantry and emphasis. But it is very interesting to all who desire to realize the ideas and images which one of the most holy and learned pontiffs of the Anglo-Saxon Church naturally appealed to, in addressing himself to the nuns of his own country and time. He quotes to them all the great examples of virginity which the Old and New Testaments could supply, or which were to be found in the lives of the Fathers and Doctors, and especially in the history of the martyrs of both sexes. But he also quotes to them Virgil and Ovid, and among others the well-known line —

"Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum;"

and that from the *Epithalamium* —

"Mellea tunc roseis hærescunt labia labris."[120]

He does not confine himself to a commonplace image, by describing them as bees who seek their honey from the most different flowers. He compares them now to athletes in the circus, taking advantage of the metaphor to make an enumeration of all the Olympian games; now to warlike cohorts engaged in a desperate struggle against what he calls the

[118] "Devota deo famula . . . usque ad ultimam senectutem eidem monasterio strenuissime, in observantia disciplinæ regularis et in earum quæ ad communes usus pertinent rerum providentia præfuit." — *Hist. Eccles.*, iv. 10. Cf. S. Bonifacii *Epist.*, 10, ed. Jaffé.

[119] "Nec non Osburgæ contribulibus necessitudinem nexibus conglutinatis, Aldgidæ ac Scholasticæ, Hildburgæ et Burngidæ, Eulaliæ ac Teclæ, rumore sanctitatis concorditer Ecclesiam ornantibus." — *De Laudibus Virginitatis*, p. 1, ed. Giles.

[120] *Ibid.*, c. 35

eight great vices; and anon he borrows his images and exhortations from military life, always mixing, in his singular Latin, modes and turns of expression which are essentially Greek, and which presuppose, among several at least of his correspondents, a certain acquaintance with the Greek language. The last lines of his treatise breathe a touching humility and tenderness. He compares himself, a poor sinner who, still plunged in the waves of corruption, shows to others the perfect shore of the perfect land, to a deformed painter who has undertaken to represent the features of beauty. "Help me, then, dear scholars of Christ," he says; "let your prayers be the reward of my work, and, as you have so often promised me, may your community be my advocates before the Almighty. Farewell, you who are the flowers of the Church, the pearls of Christ, the jewels of Paradise, the heirs of the celestial country, but who are also my sisters according to monastic rule, and my pupils by the lessons I have given you."[121]

His letters to other nuns.

Nor were the nuns of Barking the only ones to whom Aldhelm addressed the effusions of his unwearied pen, and his laboriously classic muse; and we are expressly told that the works he dedicated to them were very popular among all who followed the same career.[122] Many of his letters and poems are addressed to nuns whose names are not given, but of whom he begs not only intercession with God, but protection against criticism here below.[123] The communities who were honored by his visits or by his correspondence took pleasure, no doubt, in his play on words, and in the Greco-Latin acrostics and verbal refinements with which the celebrated prelate adorned his prose and verse; and insignificant as this kind of production appears to us now, it implies nevertheless a certain degree of literary culture generally diffused throughout the Anglo-Saxon cloisters.

But the interest which attaches to this revelation of an intellectual movement among the Anglo-Saxon nuns is in-

[121] "Pulchrum depinxi hominem pictor fœdus, aliosque ad perfectionis litus dirigo, qui adhuc in delictorum fluctibus versor. . . . Valete, o flores Ecclesiæ, sorores monasticæ, alumnæ scholasticæ, Christi margaritæ, paradisi gemmæ, et cœlestis patriæ participes." — *De Laudibus Virginitatis*, c. 60.

[122] "Berkingensium quidem nomini dedicata; sed omnibus eamdem professionem anhelantibus valitura." — Guillelm. Malmesb., i. 35.

[123] "Sed vos virgineis comit quas infula sertis,
Hoc opus adversus querulos defendite scurras," &c.
— S. Aldhelmi *Opera*, p. 213, ed. Giles.

creased, when it is remarked that intellectual pursuits, though intensely appreciated, were far from holding the first place in the heart and spirit of these new aspirants to literary glory. The salvation of souls and the tender union of hearts carried the day over all the rest. In a letter written to an abbess distinguished by birth as well as by knowledge and piety, enclosing to her a series of leonine verses he had made on a journey he had taken into Cornwall, Aldhelm takes pains to demonstrate that he is specially inspired by a tender gratitude towards her who of all women has shown him the most faithful affection.[124] And another called Osgitha, whom he exhorts to a careful study of the Holy Scriptures, he addresses as his beloved sister, ten times, and even a hundred, a thousand times beloved.[125]

Let us here take leave of Aldhelm and his learned correspondents, reminding our readers that one of his most important acts, that by which he consented to remain abbot of his three monasteries after his elevation to the episcopate, is dated from Winbourne,[126] which was the great feminine community of Wessex, founded by King Ina, and ruled by his sister Cuthburga. It was at the same time the monastery most famed for literary activity. The education of the young novices was the object of the most active and scrupulous care. Intellectual labor alternated with the works of the needle; but it is expressly said of Lioba, the nun whose name has thrown most lustre upon that community, the holy companion of Boniface in his German apostleship, that she devoted much more time to reading and studying the Holy Scriptures than to manual labor.[127] Let us also not forget that the development of spiritual fervor by prayer and the continual celebration of the monastic liturgy, occupied much the greatest place in the employment of the time and strength of all these young and generous souls.

[124] "Nullam reperisse me istic habitantium feminini sexus personam fideliorem." — S. ALDHELMI *Opera*, p. 104.

[125] "Dilectissimæ atque amantissimæ sorori. . . . Saluto te diligenter, Osgitha, ex intimo cordis cubiculo. . . . Vale! decies dilectissima, imo, centies et millies." — *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[126] Ap. GILES, p. 351. — Cf. above, p. 539.

[127] "Crevit ergo puella et tanta abbatissæ omniumque sororum cura erudiebatur, ut nihil aliud præter monasterium et cœlestis disciplinæ studia cognosceret. . . . Quando non legebat, operabatur manibus ea quæ sibi injuncta erant. . . . Lectioni tamen atque auditioni sanctarum Scripturarum magis quam labori manuum operam impendit." — *Vita S. Liobæ*, auct. RUDOLPHO, c. 7, ap. *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, vol. iv.

The five hundred nuns of Winbourne.

There were five hundred nuns at Winbourne, who were all present at the nightly service.[128] It is easy to imagine how much authority, intelligence, and watchfulness, were necessary to rule such a crowd of young souls, all, no doubt, inspired with the love of heaven, but all, at the same time, sprung from races too newly converted to have freed themselves from the characteristic features of Saxon pride and rudeness. This necessity explains why princesses of those ancient dynasties, whom the Anglo-Saxons were accustomed to follow even without always respecting them, were everywhere sought for as superiors of the great communities; and why, after the sister of King Ina, another sister of the king, Tetta,[129] was called to the government of Winbourne, at the time when Lioba was being educated there. Among the crowd of minor authorities who lent their aid to this zealous and pious abbess, was the provost (*prepositа*), the deaconess (*decana*), the portress, whose business it was to close the church after complines, and to ring the bell for matins, and who was furnished with an immense collection of keys, some of silver, others of copper or iron, according to their different destinations.[130] But neither the rank nor moral influence of the princess-abbess was always successful in restraining the barbarous impetuosity of that monastic youth.

The novices tread the tomb of their mistress under foot.

The nun who held the first rank among them after the abbess, and who was principally occupied with the care of the novices, made herself odious by her extreme severity: when she died, the hate which she inspired burst forth without pity: she was no sooner buried than the novices and young nuns rushed to the churchyard, and began to jump and dance upon her tomb, as if to tread under foot her detested corpse. This went so far that the soil, freshly filled in, which covered the remains of their enemy, sank half a foot below the level of the surrounding ground. The abbess had great trouble to make them feel what she called the hardness and cruelty of their hearts, and which she punished by imposing upon them three days of fasting and prayers for the deceased.[131]

[128] *Vita S. Liobæ*, c. 5.

[129] "Huic ergo loco post nonnullas abbatissas et spiritales matres prælata est virgo religiosa nomine *Tetta*, genere quidem secundum sæculi dignitatem nobilis (soror quippe regis erat), morum autem probitate et sanctarum spectamine virtutum multo nobilior." — *Ibid.*, c. 2.

[130] *Ibid.*, c. 5.

[131] "Nec tamen conquievit animus juvenum odientium eam, quin statim ut

IV.

Double monastery.

All that remains to be said of the strange but general institution of double monasteries — that is, two distinct communities of monks and nuns living together in the same place and under the same government — may be attached to the name of Winbourne. It is of all the establishments of this kind the one whose organization is best known to us. We have already met with the institution in Frankish Gaul, with St. Radegund and St. Columbanus, at Poitiers, at Remiremont, and elsewhere. We shall find them again in Belgium and Germany as soon as the monastic missionaries shall have carried the light of the Gospel there. Their origin has been largely discussed,[132] and we do not pretend to give any decision on the subject. Examples may be found among the Fathers of the desert in Egypt and as far back as the times of St. Pacome,[133] who, however, placed the Nile between the two communities under his government. We have already pointed out a remarkable attempt at the same institution in Spain caused by the prodigious crowd of monastic neophytes of both sexes who gathered round St. Fructuosus.[134] Notwithstanding the assertion of Muratori to the contrary, the unassailable testimony of Bede proves that there was at least one community of the same kind in Rome in the middle of the seventh century.[135]

These establishments, however, were more popular in Ireland than anywhere else, where they sprang spontaneously

aspicerent locum in quo sepulta est, maledicerent crudelitati ejus; immo ascendentes tumulum, et quasi funestum cadaver conculcantes, in solatium doloris sui amarissimis insultationibus mortuæ exprobrarent. Quod cum mater congregationis venerabilis Tetta comperisset, temerariam juvenculatum præsumptionem correptionis vigore compescens, perrexit ad tumulum et mirum in modum conspexit terram quæ desuper congesta erat subsedisse et usque ad semi pedis spatium infra summitatem sepulcri descendisse." — *Vita S. Liobæ*, c. 3.

[132] Mabillon, *Ann. Bened.*, vol. i. p. 125; Lanigan, *Eccles. Hist. of Ireland*, vol. ii. pp. 19, 20; Lingard, *Antiquities*, vol. i. 212; and above all, Varin, 2d *Memoir*, already frequently quoted.

[133] See vol. i. p. 179. Cf. Palladius, *Hist. Lausiaca*, 30–42; Bolland., vol. iii. May, p. 304.

[134] See above, vol. i. p. 435.

[135] "Cum monachum quemdam de vicino *Virginum* monasterio, nomine Andream, pontifici offerret, hic ab omnibus qui novere, dignus episcopatu judicatus est." — *Hist. Eccl.*, vol. iv. p. 1. Muratori maintains that double monasteries have always been unknown in Italy. — *Antiquit. Medii Ævi*, vol. v. p. 527.

from the beginning of the conversion of the island, to such a point that the apostle of the country, St. Patrick, saw himself obliged to forestall by wise precautions the disorders and scandals which might have arisen from the too close and frequent intercourse of the monks and nuns.[136] At the same time, the first pontiffs and missionaries of Hibernia, strong in the exceptional purity of the Irish temperament, which has continued to our own day the glorious privilege of the race, and strong above all in their own fervor and exclusive passion for the salvation of souls, feared neither the society of the women they had converted, nor the charge of governing them when they wished to devote themselves to God.[137] Less assured of themselves, if not more humble, their successors, those who are described as *saints of the second order* in the hagiographical annals of Ireland, declined the responsibility of administering the more or less numerous communities of virgins who grouped themselves around the older saints.[138] They carried this restriction so far as to refuse access to their retreat even to recluses who came to seek the viaticum from them.[139] However, the custom of combining the foun-

[136] "Sanxivit ut a mulieribus viri sequestrarentur, et utrique sua ædificia et oratoria distincta construerentur." — Jocelinus, *Vit. S. Patr.*, ap. Bolland., p. 592. The ninth canon of the 2d council, which is attributed to him, is thus expressed: "Monachus et virgo, unus ab hinc et alia ab aliunde, in uno hospitio non commeant, nec in uno curru a villa in villam discurrant, nec assidue invicem confabulationem exerceant." — Ap. Coletti, vol. iv. p. 754.

[137] "Mulierum administrationem et consortia non respuebant: quia super petram Christi fundati, ventum tentationis non timebant." Original text quoted by Ussher. To this category of the saints there may be added Bishop Dega Maccaryl (already spoken of above, vol. i. p. 695), who died in 589, and of whom it is said: "Confluxerunt undique ad eum sanctæ virgines, ut *sub ejus regula* degerent. . . . Moniales illas versus septentrionem ducens, in diversis locis diversa monasteria, in quibus cum aliis virginibus seorsum Deo servirent, eis, prout, decuit, construxit." — Bolland., vol. iii. August, p. 660. It appears also that a neighboring abbot reproached the holy bishop, "ut eum de susceptione virginum objurgaret."

There is also the case of the thirty girls enamoured of St. Mochuda, who ended by becoming nuns under his authority, already mentioned, vol. i. p. 697. And also that of St. Monynna, the contemporary of St. Patrick, who, with eight other virgins and a widow, went to the holy bishop Ibar, and "longo tempore sub ipsius disciplina cum multis aliis virginibus permansit." — Bolland., vol. ii. July, p. 291.

[138] "Pauci episcopi et multi presbyteri, diversas missas celebrabant, et diversas regulas; unum Pascha XIV. luna; unam tonsuram ab aure ad aurem; *abnegabant mulierum administrationem*, separantes eas a monasteriis." — Text quoted by Ussher.

[139] This is related of St. Senanus, who, about 530, founded a monastery in an island at the mouth of the Shannon, where no woman was permitted to disembark: —

dation, or at least the administration, of nunneries, along with that of similar communities of men, continued to prevail. But as the holy abbots declined to undertake the charge of nuns, the conditions had to be reversed. From this fact, no doubt, arose the singular custom universally established from the seventh century, not in Ireland, where I can find no example of it, but in all the Irish colonies, of two united communities, placed, not the nuns under the rule of an ecclesiastic, but the monks under that of the abbess of their neighboring nuns.

Such was the state of things in the foundations which we have seen develop under the influence of St. Columbanus, the Irish apostle of the Gauls, in the Vosges, in the valley of the Marne and of the Seine; and such too are the conditions which we shall find in Belgium when we consider the monastic influence of the Irish and Britons there. The Anglo-Saxon princesses devoted to the cloister found this custom established in the houses where they received their monastic education in Gaul, at Faremoutier, les Andelys, Chelles, and Jouarre,[140] and brought it into England, where it was immediately adopted; for of all the great nunneries of which we have spoken, not one was without a monastery of clerks or priests placed at the gates of the community of nuns, and ruled by their abbess.[141] Let us recall only Whitby, where the Princess Hilda directed the monastery school, the nursery of so many bishops and missionaries, but of which the cowherd-poet Ceadmon, so often quoted, remains the principal celebrity;[142] and Ely, where Queen Etheldreda attracted by her example, and arrayed under her authority, not only holy priests, but even men of elevated rank in secular life.[143] No doubt the necessity of providing for the spiritual wants, in the first place, of the numerous nuns who filled these monasteries, and of the lay population spread over the vast lands

> "Cui præsul: quid feminis
> Commune est cum monachis?
> Nec te nec ullam aliam
> Admittemus in insulam."
>
> *Vita Rhythmica*, ap. LANIGAN, ii. 7.

[140] BEDE, iii. 8. MABILLON, *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, i. 420, iii. 20.

[141] "Erat eo tempore monasteriis feminarum, amplis præsertim ac numerosis, conjuncta virorum, qui iis sacra administrarent, et familiam reliquam erudirent: eidem tamen abbatissæ omnes obediebant." — BOLLAND., *De S. Cedmono*, vol. ii. February, p. 552.

[142] See p. 264.

[143] See p. 372. Another instance is that of Repton, where St. Guthlac became a monk under the Abbess Elfrida. See p. 586 of this volume.

which the foundress, generally a princess of the reigning dynasty, conferred upon her community, contributed more than anything else to the extension of so singular a custom. The priests and clerks charged with this double mission found themselves naturally collected in a sort of community under the authority of her who was at once the spiritual superior and the lady — the seigneuress, if such a word may be used — of the monastic lands.[144] The whole together formed a sort of vast family, governed by a mother instead of a father, maternity being the natural form of authority — all the more so as the neophytes were often admitted with all their dependants, as was Ceadmon, who entered Whitby with all belonging to him, including a child of three years old, whom Bede describes as being nursed and cared for in the cell of the learned nuns of Barking.[145]

The Greco-Asiatic Archbishop Theodore, when he came from Rome to complete the organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church,[146] does not appear to have relished this institution, which was not unknown to the Christian East, but which had probably left equivocal recollections behind it. In one of his charges he forbids all new foundations of this description, though respecting those which already existed.[147] But like so many other canons and decrees, his prohibition was disregarded; communities founded after his death, like Winbourne, were in full flower in the eighth century, and nothing indicates that double monasteries had ceased to flourish up to the general destruction of monasteries by the Danes at the end of the ninth century. They were swept away by that calamity, and no trace of them is to be found in the monastic revival of which King Alfred and the great Abbot Dunstan were the authors. It was a peculiarity belonging to the youth of the Church, which, like youth in all circumstances, went through all the difficulties, dangers, storms, and disorders of nature proper to that age, which disappear in maturer times.

[144] Lingard, *Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 212.

[145] "Cædmon . . . susceptum in monasterium cum omnibus suis fratrum cohorti associavit." — *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 24. "Puer trium circiter annorum . . . qui propter infantilem adhuc ætatem in virginum Deo dedicatarum solebat cella nutriri, ibique medicari." — *Ibid.*, iv. 8. We meet with many examples of a mother and daughter or two sisters being dedicated to God in the same convent. — Cf. Bede, v. 3.

[146] See p. 346.

[147] "Non licet viris feminas habere monachas, neque feminis viros, tamen non destruamus illud quod consuetudo est in hac terra." — *Capitula et Fragmenta*, ap. Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes*, p. 307.

This institution, however, is a new and very striking proof of the power of woman in the social order, a fact which we have already pointed out, following the example of Tacitus, both among the Germans and Britons.[148] Maintained, consolidated, and, in certain respects, sanctified by the Christian spirit among the Anglo-Saxons, it has remained very powerful in the race. It has produced that deference at once official and popular for the weaker sex, and, I willingly add, that public modesty of which the Anglo-Saxons of the present day in the United States give us so brilliant and honorable an example in their primary schools for boys, directed often in the midst of great cities, by young girls, who are protected against all outrage, and even all sarcasm, by the universal respect of both fathers and sons.[149]

Let us hasten to add that even at this primitive period no trace of the abuses or disorders which the suspicious spirit of modern criticism might summon into being, are to be found. This is explained by the precautions everywhere to be met with when double monasteries existed, and which seem never to have been discontinued. The double family lived separately, in two buildings entirely distinct,[150] though near. As a general rule the nuns did not leave their cloister, and the monks were strictly forbidden to enter the enclosure reserved to the nuns, without the permission of the abbess, and the presence of several witnesses. At Winbourne, which must always be quoted as the type of establishments of this description, the two monasteries rose side by side, like two fortresses, each surrounded by battlemented walls. The austerity of primitive discipline existed in full vigor at the time when Lioba, who was destined, under the auspices of St. Boniface, to introduce conventual life among the women of Germany, resided there. The priests were bound to leave the church immediately after the celebration of mass, bishops themselves were not admitted into the nunnery, and the abbess communicated with the external world, to give her orders to her

720-748.

[148] "Neque enim sexum in imperio discernunt." — *Agric.*, c. 16. "Solitum Britannis feminarum ductu bellare." — *Annal.*, xiv. 35.

[149] Emile de Laveleye, *De l'Instruction Publique en Amérique*, confirmed by the accounts of all impartial travellers.

[150] "Multi de fratribus ejusdem monasterii qui aliis erant in ædibus" (Bede, iii. 8), regarding Faremoutier. "Eam monasterii partem, qua ancillarum Dei caterva a virorum erat secreta contubernio" (*Ibid.*, iv. 7), as to Barking.

spiritual and temporal subjects, only through a barred window.[151]

Coldingham is the only great community of this kind mentioned in history, the memory of which is not irreproachable, a fact which has been already mentioned in treating of the historical position of the Northumbrian princess, Ebba, foundress of that house.[152] It must, however, be fully granted that the scandals pointed out by the severe and sincere Bede are not such as we might be tempted to expect; they are rather failures in obedience to the cloistral rule, than any infringements of Christian morality. These scandals, besides, whether small or great, were gloriously atoned for in the following century, when, under another Ebba, the nuns of Coldingham, to escape from the brutality of the Danish conquerors, cut off their noses and lips, and by their heroic self-mutilation added the palm of martyrdom to that of virginity.[153]

With this single exception, the unanimous testimony of contemporary authors, as well as of more recent annalists, does full homage to the obedience to rule, the fervor, and even austerity of the double monasteries among the Anglo-Saxons. A great number of the most illustrious female saints, and prelates most distinguished by their virtues and knowledge, were educated in these communities, which were surrounded by universal veneration, and whose pure fame was never tarnished by the breath of calumny.[154]

The abuses of the Anglo-Saxon monasteries.

Is this to say that all was perfect in the monastic institutions of the country and time which I have undertaken to bring to the knowledge of the world? God forbid that I should thus attempt to deceive my readers. The more I advance in my laborious and thankless task — that is to say, the nearer I approach to my grave — the more do I feel mastered and overpowered

[151] "Porro ipsa congregationis mater, quando aliquid exteriorum pro utilitate monasterii ordinare vel mandare necesse erat, per fenestram loquebatur, et inde decernebat quæcumque ordinanda aut mandanda utilitatis ratio exigebat. . . . Virgines vero cum quibus ipsa indesinenter manebat, adeo immunes a virorum voluit esse consortio, ut non tantum laicis aut clericis, verum etiam ipsis quoque episcopis in congregationem earum negaret ingressum." — *Vita S. Liobæ*, auct. Rudolpho, c. 2, ap. *Acta SS. O. S. B.*, sæc. iii. p. 2.

[152] See p. 270.

[153] "Exemplum . . . non solum sanctimonialibus illis proficuum, verum etiam omnibus successuris virginibus æternaliter amplectendum." — Matth. West., Rog. Wendov., Ric. Cirenc., ii. 70.

[154] Lingard, *l. c.*

by an ardent and respectful love of truth, the more do I feel myself incapable of betraying truth, even for the benefit of what I most love here below. The mere idea of adding a shadow to those which already shroud it, fills me with horror. To veil the truth, to hide it, to forsake it under the pretence of serving the cause of religion, which is nothing but supreme truth, would be, in my opinion, to aggravate a lie by a kind of sacrilege. Forgive me, all timid and scrupulous souls! But I hold that in history everything should be sacrificed to truth — that it must be always spoken, on every subject, and in its full integrity. The lying panegyric, where truth is sacrificed merely by leaving out what is true, is quite as repugnant to me as the invectives of calumny.

I have therefore sought with conscientious care for evidences of all the abuses and disorders which could exist in English monasteries, and especially in nunneries. If I have found almost nothing, it is not for want of having thoroughly searched through the historians and other writers of the time. I may then venture to conclude that evil, which is inseparable from everything human, has left fewer traces in the Anglo-Saxon cloisters than elsewhere.

I hesitate to insist with the same severity which was shown by the pontiffs and doctors of the time on the first of their complaints against the Anglo-Saxon communities, the excessive liking for rich and fine stuffs, in which certain nuns loved to dress themselves after having made them. These wonders of the distaff and broidery-needle, as they were used in the English cloisters, excited not only the anxiety but the indignation of the masters of spiritual life. Bede found nothing more serious to note in the transgressions which were to draw down the wrath of heaven upon Coldingham.[155] Boniface, when he became archbishop and pontifical legate in Germany, did not hesitate to indicate this as one of the greatest dangers of monastic life.[156] Aldhelm exerts all his rhetoric to preserve his friends at Barking from the revolting luxury displayed by the clergy of both sexes in their vestments, and especially

Luxury in dress.

[155] "Texendis subtilioribus indumentis operam dant, quibus at seipsas ad vicem sponsarum in periculum sui status adornent, aut externorum sibi virorum amicitiam comparent. Unde merito . . . de cœlo vindicta flammis sævientibus præparata est." — *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 25.

[156] "Ut clericos et sanctimoniales de tenuitate et pompa vestium argueret." — GUILL. MALMESB., c. 82, p. 115. See above the text of the letter.

by the abbesses and nuns, who wore scarlet and violet tunics, hoods and cuffs trimmed with furs and silk; who curled their hair with a hot iron all round their foreheads; who changed their veil into an ornament, arranging it in such a way as to make it fall to their feet; and who, finally, sharpened and bent their nails so as to make them like the claws of falcons and other birds of prey, destined by nature to chase the vermin upon which they feed.[157]

747. The Council of Cloveshove, however, justified these accusations by ordaining the monks and nuns to keep to the costume of their predecessors, and in particular to recall to their minds the simple and pure dress which they put on in the day of their profession, that they might no longer resemble by a too gay exterior the women of the world.[158]

Let us pass on to facts of a graver nature. Do we not meet on our path some of those disorders which, in modern times, the religious orders have been accused of as unpardonable crimes? Has compulsion never been employed to impose monastic life upon the young Anglo-Saxons? I am led to suppose that such a thing must sometimes have occurred when I read in the *Penitentiary* of Archbishop Theodore that daughters whom their parents had compelled to become nuns should be exempted from all punishment, even spiritual, if they married afterwards.[159]

Attempts on the modesty of nuns.

Was the virginal modesty of these *brides of the Lord*, which the Anglo-Saxons surrounded by so much national and popular veneration, always respected by those who occupied the first rank in the newly-converted nations, and for that reason ought to have shown them an example?

I am obliged to admit that this was not the case. Con-

[157] "Subucula bissina, sive hyacinthea, tunica còccinea capitium et manicæ sericis clavate calliculæ rubricatis pellibus ambiuntur, anticæ frontis et temporum cicini calamistro crispantur, pulla capitis velamina candidis et coloratis mafortibus cedunt, quæ vittarum nexibus assutæ talo tenus prolixius dependunt, ungues ritu falconum et accipitrum, seu certe cavannarum (*sic*) quos naturaliter ingenita edendi necessitas instigat, obunca pedum fuscinula et rapaci ungularum arpigine alites et sorices crudeliter insectando grassari." — *De Laudibus Virginit.*, c. 58. Cf. c. 17 and 56.

[158] "Non debent iterum habere indumenta sæcularia, et ornatis et nitidis vestibus incedere, quibus laicæ puellæ uti solent." — Can. 28, ap. COLETTI, vol. viii. p. 331.

[159] "Puellæ quæ *non parentum coactæ imperio*, sed spontaneo judicio, virginitatis propositum atque habitum susceperunt, si postea nuptias diligunt, prævaricantur, etiamsi consecratio non accesserit." — *Liber Pœnitentialis*, c. xvi. § 24, ap. THORPE, p. 282.

temporary documents of unquestionable authority prove that more than one Anglo-Saxon king seems to have taken special pleasure in seeking his prey among the virgins consecrated to God.[160] It is probable that the princes and nobles followed but too often the example of the kings. Besides divers incidents which have retained a place in history, the many provisions of the penal laws under the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman kings, from Alfred to Henry I., against the rape of nuns — even when followed by subsequent marriage — and other outrages to their modesty, prove that such crimes were sufficiently well known to exact habitual and energetic repression.[161] It is but too easy to imagine the fascination with which men still half barbarians must have been attracted towards the crowds of young girls, often beautiful and of high lineage, always pure, well educated, and trained in the utmost delicacy to which civilization then reached, who were gathered together in the spiritual fortresses which might guard them against the temptations of secular life, but were ineffectual to protect them from the assaults of the great ones of this earth, traditionally accustomed to sacrifice everything to the gratification of their passions.

Still more surprising and afflicting are the decrees given by the principal spiritual legislators of the country, the great archbishops, Theodore of Canterbury and Egbert of York, which foresee and punish transgressions of cloistral continence in which violence could have no part, and which lead us to suppose that such crimes might be committed even by those whose duty it was to watch over the purity of the

[160] See what is said above, quoting the epistles of St. Boniface, as to Osred, King of Northumbria, and Ceolred and Ethelbald, Kings of Mercia.

[161] The laws of Alfred foresaw and punished offences against the purity of nuns by the following regulations: —

"§ 8. *De concubitu nunne.* Qui duxerit sanctimonialem ab ecclesia, sine licentia regis aut episcopi, amende de 120 sols;" half to the king, half to the bishop, "et ipsius ecclesiæ domino cujus monacha fuit." If she survives him "qui eam abduxit, nihil de pecunia ejus habeat." If she has a child "nihil inde habeat infans, sicut nec mater ejus."

"§ 18. Si quis nunnam, causa fornicationis, in vestes aut in sinum, sine licentia comprehendat, sit hoc duplo amendabile, sicut antea de laica decrevimus." — Ap. THORPE, pp. 32, 34, fol. ed.

The same offence is punished by section 4 of King Edmond's ecclesiastical laws (940-946) by deprivation of Christian burial, "unless he make bot, no more than a man-slayer."

Art. 39 of the laws of the Council of Enham under Ethelred says, "If any one defile a nun, let him make bot deeply before God and the world." The law of Henry I., art. 73, *de nunne concubitu*, orders the culprit to go to Rome: "adeat Papam et consilium ejus scire faciat."

sanctuary — those whose sacred character ought to have imposed upon them the strongest of all restraints — by priests and even bishops.[162] Let us state, however, that, at least during the period of which we have spoken, history reports no known incident which gives support to the humiliating provisions of the law; and we may add that Archbishop Theodore might have brought from his Eastern home the fear or recollection of certain excesses and corruptions which were strange to the character and habits of the northern nations, and have given them a place in his laws under the form of useful warnings. We should run the risk of falling into injustice and absurdity did we draw from such and such a provision of the penal code the conclusion that crimes thus stigmatized and punished were habitually committed by the nation which by its laws protested against them.[163]

Impartiality, besides, requires us to remind our readers of all that has been already said in respect to the abuses that had crept into the monastic order from the time of Bede; upon the false monasteries which were nothing but lands worked to the profit of lay donors, ridiculously tricked out in the title of abbot; and upon the false monks and nuns who inhabited these contraband monasteries, and lived there in every kind of disorder.[164] To these pretenders, who, notwithstanding their known character, bore nevertheless the

[162] The *Liber Pœnitentialis* of Theodore (chap. xvi.) provides for the case where a layman "fornicationem iniretur cum multis . . . sanctimonialibus, *ita ut etiam numerum nesciat*," and condemns the culprit to ten years' fasting, three on bread and water. Chap. xviii., *De fornicatione clericorum*, gives twelve years of penance to a guilty bishop, ten to a priest, eight to a monk or deacon, five to a clerk. The nun is equally punished. If there are children, the penance is prolonged to fifteen, twelve, ten, eight, and six years.

The married layman "maculans se cum ancilla Dei:" six years, two with bread and water; seven years if he has a child; five if he is not married. His companion in guilt the same.

"§ 20. Si quis monacham quam ancillam Dei appellant, in conjugio duxerit, anathema sit." — Ap. THORPE, pp. 282, 283.

"Monachus vel puella consecrata, si fornicati fuerint, septem annos jejunent." — ECGBERTI, Arch. Ebor., *Confessionale*, art. 13. Cf. ECGBERTI, *Excerptiones*, No. 134 and 136.

[163] What, for example, would be thought of an historian who from the text of art. 310 of our Penal Code concluded that the offence it punishes was common in France?

[164] We may here recall the passage already partially quoted: "Quod enim turpe est dicere, tot sub nomine monasteriorum loca (*sic*) hi qui monachicæ vitæ prorsus sunt expertes in suam ditionem acceperunt. . . . Vel majore scelere atque impudentia, qui propositum castitatis non habent, luxuriæ ac fornicationi deserviant, neque ab ipsis sacratis Deo virginibus abstineant." — BEDÆ *Epist. ad Ecgbert.*, c. 6.

title of *monachi* or *sanctimoniales*, are no doubt to be most generally imputed the excesses assailed in the ordinances of the English metropolitans and by the letters of St. Boniface; and let us hope that the accusation conveyed in the terrible and untranslatable words of his letter to the king of Mercia, "*Illæ meretrices, sive monasteriales sive sæculares*," [165] may be referred to the same class. Finally, it may be added that the great apostle, who was inspired at once by love of religion and desire for the honor of his country, spoke only by hearsay: that his most violent accusations are tempered by expressions of doubt; and that he never himself complained on his own authority of anything he had personally known or seen before his departure for Germany, but only what had been carried to him by report, more or less well founded, during the course of his mission in Germany.

V.

The letters of St. Boniface and his correspondents contain the most authentic information upon the state of souls in the Anglo-Saxon cloisters.

The correspondence of St. Boniface, which is a precious and unique mine [166] of information as to the ideas and institutions of the Teutonic races at their entrance into Christianity, reveals to us besides, in many aspects, the spirit which reigned in the cloisters inhabited by Anglo-Saxon nuns. Before as well as after his apostolic career in Germany, Winefred, the most illustrious monk in Essex, kept up frequent and intimate intercourse with the most distinguished nuns of his country. The letters which he wrote to them, and those which he received from them, acquired a double interest after his departure for the yet unexplored regions in which martyrdom awaited him. Only a very small number of them remains to us; but the

[165] *Epistolæ* S. Bonifacii, No. 59, ed. Jaffé, p. 175. He says also, in a letter to Archbishop Egbert of York: "Inauditum enim malum est præteritis sæculis et in triplo vel quadruplo sodomitanam luxuriam vincens, ut gens Christiana . . . despiciat legitima matrimonia . . . et nefanda stupra consecratarum et velatarum feminarum sequatur." — *Ibid.*, No. 61.

[166] It may be remarked that the usefulness of this collection is greatly lessened by the mania of each of its editors (Würdwein in 1789, Giles in 1844, and Migne in 1863), subsequent to the first publication by Serrarius in 1605, for changing the order and numbering of the Epistles. We have adopted the numbers given in the last and extremely correct edition by Jaffé (*Monumenta Moguntina*, in *Bibliotheca Rerum Germanicarum*, vol. iii., Berolini, 1866), who thinks he has succeeded in introducing a certain chronological order entirely wanting in the older editions.

few which have been preserved suffice to afford us a glimpse of what was passing in the souls of these generous, intelligent, and impassioned women, whose life was passed in the shadow of monasteries, and among whom the great missionary found not only devoted sympathy, but the most active and useful assistants.

It is evident, in the first place, from this picture, that all was not happiness and gentleness in the cloister. We are all apt to exaggerate both in the past and present the peace and serenity of religious life amid the storms either of the ancient world, so violent, warlike, and unsettled, or of modern society, so frivolous in its emotions, so servile, and so changeable in its servility. We are right to look upon the cloister as a nest suspended amid the branches of a great tree shaken by the winds, or like the inner chamber of a vessel beaten by the waves. It is in the midst of the storm, yet in it there is shelter; a refuge always threatened, always fragile, always perishable, but still a refuge. Outside is the noise of the waves, the rain, and the thunder; at every moment destruction is possible, or even near. But in the mean time the soul is safe; it is calm, protected, preserved, and sails on with humble confidence towards the port. Such a joy is sufficiently tempered by the sense of insecurity to be safe from becoming in itself a danger, a temptation to laxity or to pride.

But in this nest and in this bark, preserved from external tempests, how many storms and perils and sunken rocks are within! Even in the midst of the most peaceful and best regulated community, what a trial is there in the daily death of individual will! in the long hours of obscurity and silence which succeed to the effort and impulse of sacrifice! and in the perpetual sacrifice, continually borne, continually renewed! A modern master of spiritual life has said, with severe clear-sightedness, "The continuity alone of the exercises, which, although varied, have always something in them that goes against human inclinations, *from the moment that they are done by rule and for the service of God*, becomes very fatiguing."[167] What a ray of pitiless light is thus thrown upon the weakness of the human heart! It accustoms itself to the rules, habits, and even to the most onerous obligations which have a purely earthly aim. But from the

[167] Notice of the Société de la Sainte-Retraite, commenced at Fontenelles, in the diocese of Besançon, 1787, by M. Receveur, p. 19 of the text corrected in 1791.

moment that it is a work for God, dislike appears. The difficulty must be met and surmounted day by day. This is the great exertion, and also the infinite merit, of cloistral life.

If this is the case even among our contemporaries, who have been so long fashioned by Christian education and discipline, what must have been the effect upon the Saxon maidens of the seventh and eighth centuries, sprung from a race still new and young in the ways of the Lord, and which was still so impetuous, so turbulent, so enamoured of its own strength, freedom, and untamed independence? To the material restraint, which, though voluntarily accepted, might well lie heavy upon them, were added other privations of which they had not perhaps calculated beforehand all the extent. Hence those restrained but incurable agitations, those cries of distress, those vague but ardent and impetuous desires, which break forth in the pages on which they poured out their hearts to the greatest and holiest of their countrymen.

Impassioned letters written by the nuns.

It is to be regretted that these candid and eager souls had recourse to Latin to express their emotions and confidences. If they had employed their native idiom instead of a language which, though not dead, since it is the language of spiritual life, must have cost them many efforts ere they became familiar with it, we should no doubt have seen their thoughts flow forth more freely, precipitating themselves in tumultuous waves, in abrupt movements, bearing the characteristic mark of a powerful and impassioned originality, like the verse of Ceadmon or the poem of Beowulf. Even under the artificial constraint imposed upon them by the use of Latin, the reader feels the swelling life and force of an original, sincere, and vehement nature.

The most striking peculiarity of these letters, in which unpractised hands reveal, in Latin more or less classical, and in superlatives more or less elegant, the agitations of their hearts, is the necessity they feel to express the tenderness, we might even say the passion, which animates them. The intensity of the affection which united some of them to each other, may be imagined from the tender enthusiasm of language with which they address the monk who has gained their confidence. Here is an example taken from a letter written to Winefred, after the first success of his mission in Germany, by the Abbess Bugga, who is supposed to have been the daughter of a king of Wessex, and who was con-

sequently of the same race as her illustrious correspondent.[168]

"I do not cease to thank God for all that I have learned by your blessed letter; that He has led you mercifully through so many unknown countries; that He has favorably inclined towards you the heart of the Pontiff of glorious Rome; that He has cast down before you the enemy of the Catholic Church, Radbod the Frisian. But I declare to you that no revolution of time, no human vicissitude, can change the state of my mind towards you, nor turn it from loving you as I am resolved. The fervor of love so inspires me, that I am profoundly convinced of arriving at certain repose by your prayers. I renew, then, my entreaties to you to intercede in favor of my lowliness with the Lord. I have not yet been able to obtain the *Passions of the Martyrs*, which you ask me for. I will get them as soon as I can. But you, dearest, send me, for my consolation, that collection of *Extracts* from the Holy Scriptures which you have promised me in your sweet letter. I beseech you to offer the oblation of the holy mass for one of my relations, called N., whom I loved above all. I send you by the bearer of these lines fifty sols and an altar-cloth; I have not been able to procure anything better. It is a little gift, but is offered you with great love."[169]

Answers not less affectionate of Boniface and his companions.

Boniface and the companions of his mission were not less affectionate and unreserved in their epistolary communications with their sisters in religion. He wrote to those whom he hoped to draw to his aid, and associate with himself in his apostolic work, as follows: "To my venerable, estimable, and dearest sisters, Leobgitha, Thekla, and Cynegilda, and to all the other sisters who dwell with you, and ought to be loved like you, in Jesus Christ, the salutations of an eternal affection. I conjure and enjoin you to continue to do what you

[168] There are two, if not three, nuns of the name of Bugga, among Boniface's correspondents. We agree with the editor of *Notes* on the monastic tombs discovered at Hackness, p. 35, that the one here alluded to is the same whose ecclesiastical buildings are celebrated in the poem by St. Aldhelm (MIGNE, *Patrology*, vol. lxxxix. p. 289), and to whom St. Boniface wrote his letter 86, ed. Jaffé, commencing, "O soror carissima."

[169] "Venerando Dei famulo . . . Bonifacio sive Wynfritho dignissimo Dei presbytero Bugga vilis vernacula, perpetuæ caritatis salutem. . . . Eo magis confiteor, quod nulla varietas temporalium vicissitudinum statum mentis meæ inclinare queat. . . . Sed ardentius vis amoris in me calescit, dum pro certo cognosco. . . . Et tu, mi carissimus (*sic*), dirige meæ parvitati ad consolationem, quod per dulcissimas litteras tuas promisisti." — *Epist.* 16.

have done in the past, and must do always, that is, pray God, who is the refuge of the poor and the hope of the humble, to deliver me from my necessities and temptations, I who am the last and least of all to whom the Church of Rome has intrusted the preaching of the Gospel. Implore for me the mercy of God that, at the day when the wolf comes, I may not fly like an hireling, but that I may follow the example of the good Shepherd, and bravely defend the sheep and the lambs, that is to say, the Catholic Church with its sons and daughters, against heretics, schismatics, and hypocrites. On your side, in these evil days, be not imprudent. Seek with intelligence to know the will of God. Act manfully with the strength given you by faith, but do all with charity and patience. Remember the Apostles and Prophets who have suffered so much, and received an eternal recompense." [170]

A still more tender confidence seems to inspire him when he writes to the abbesses of the great English communities, and especially to Eadburga, who was to succeed St. Mildred in the government of the monastery founded by her mother upon the shore where St. Augustin landed.[171] He calls her "blessed virgin and beloved lady, accomplished mistress of the monastic rule." [172] He entreats her to pray for him while he is beaten about by all the storms which he must brave in the midst of heathens, false Christians, false priests, and licentious clerks.[173] "Do not be displeased that I always ask the same thing. I must ask often for that which I desire incessantly. My troubles are daily, and each day thus warns me to seek the spiritual consolations of my brethren and sisters." [174]

As his task becomes more laborious his heart has more and more occasion to pour itself forth to his old friend. "To

[170] "Venerandis et amandis carissimis sororibus . . æterne caritatis salutem obsecro et præcipio quasi filiabus carissimis. . . . Quia ultimus et pessimus sum omnium legatorum." — *Ep.* 91.

[171] See above, p. 383. The Abbess Eadburga only died in 751, four years before St. Boniface. He corresponded with her as well as with the Abbess of Barking before his departure for Germany.

[172] "Beatissimæ virgini immo dilectissimæ dominæ Eadburge, monasticæ normulæ conversationis emeritæ." — *Ep.* 10.

[173] Epist. 87, ed. Jaffé; 27, ed. Serrarius. The latter concludes, from certain passages, that this letter must have been addressed to Eadburga, although it bears no name, and says simply: "Reverendissimæ ac dilectissimæ ancillæ Christi N."

[174] "Rogo ut non indignemini . . . quia cotidiana tribulatio divina solamina fratrum ac sororum me quærere admonet." — *Ep.* 87, ed. Jaffé.

my beloved sister, the Abbess Eadburga, long interwoven with my soul by the ties of spiritual relationship. To my sister Eadburga, whom I clasp with the golden links of spiritual love, and whom I embrace with the divine and virgin kiss of charity, Boniface, bishop, legate of the Roman Church, servant of the servants of God. . . . Know that for my sins' sake the course of my pilgrimage is through storms; suffering and sadness are everywhere around me; and the saddest of all is the snare laid by false brethren, which is worse than the malice of the unbelievers. Pray, then, to the Lamb of God, the only defender of my life, to protect me amidst all these wolves. . . . Pray also for these heathens who have been intrusted to us by the Apostolic See, that God, who desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, may deign to wrest them from idolatry and add them to our mother the Catholic Church. May the eternal rewarder of every good action make thee to triumph for ever in the glorious company of angels, my beloved sister, who by sending a copy of the Holy Scriptures hast consoled the poor exile in Germany. The man who has to penetrate into the darkest corners of these nations, cannot but fall into the snares of death, if he has not the word of God to light his steps. Pray, pray always, that He who from the highest heaven looks upon all that is humblest here below, may pardon me my sins, and grant to me when I open my mouth the eloquence that is needed to make the Gospel of the glory of Christ run and shine like a flame among the heathen nations."[175]

He wrote with not less effusion and tenderness to the Abbess Bugga,[176] who, overwhelmed with trials in the gov-

[175] "Dilectissimæ sorori et jamdudum spiritalis clientelæ propinquitate connexæ. . . . Aureo spiritalis amoris vinculo amplectendæ et divino ac virgineo caritatis osculo stringendo sorori Eadburgæ abbatissæ. . . . Undique labor, undique mœror. . . . Carissimam sororem remunerator æternus . . . lætificet . . . quæ, sanctorum librorum munera transmittendo, exulem Germanicum . . . consolata est. . . . Qui tenebrosos angulos Germanicarum gentium lustrare debet." — *Epist.* 73, 75, ed. Jaffé. "Ut præstet mihi verbum in apertione oris mei" (*Ephes.* vi. 19); "ut currat et clarificetur inter gentes Evangelium gloriæ Christi" (2 *Thessal.* iii. 1).

[176] This Bugga was also called Eadburga. Could she be, as has been often supposed, the *Heaburg cognomento Bugga* who figures in the title of Epistle 14 ed. Jaffé, 38 ed. Serrarius, 30 ed. Giles? Nothing, it appears to us, can be more doubtful, but we have neither time nor power to discuss a question in itself so unimportant. The Anglo-Saxon custom of having two names, which we have already met with in the cases of Domneva or Ermenberga, foundress of Minster, and Winefrid or Boniface, &c., adds to the diffi-

ernment of her double monastery, had sought comfort from him, and who was anxious to complete her life by a pilgrimage to Rome. "To my beloved lady, the sister whom I love in the love of Christ, more than all other women, the humble Boniface, unworthy bishop. . . . Ah, dearest sister, since the fear of God and the love of travel have put between us so many lands and seas, I have learned from many, what storms of trouble have assailed your old age. I am deeply grieved to hear it, and lament that, after having put aside the chief cares of the government of your monasteries, out of love for a life of contemplation, you should have met with crosses still more frequent and more painful. I write thus, venerable sister, full of compassion for your griefs, and full also of the recollections of your kindness and of our ancient friendship, to exhort and console you as a brother. . . . I would that you were always joyful and happy in that hope of which the Apostle speaks, which is born of trial and never deceives. I would that you should despise with all your strength these worldly troubles as the soldiers of Christ of both sexes have always despised them. . . . In the springtime of your youth, the father and lover of your chaste virginity called you to Him with the irresistible accent of fatherly love; and it is He who, now that you are old, would increase the beauty of your soul by so many labors and trials. Meet, then, dearest friend, the sufferings of heart and body with the buckler of faith and patience, that you may complete in your beautiful old age the work commenced in the flower of your youth. At the same time, I entreat you, remember your ancient promise, and do not cease to pray the Lord that He may deliver my soul from all peril. . . . Farewell, and be sure that the faith which we have sworn to each other will never fail."[177]

culty and confusion, sometimes completely inextricable, of all researches into the history of the early Anglo-Saxon Church.

[177] "O soror carissima, postquam nos timor Christi et amor peregrinationis longa et lata terrarum ac maris intercapedine separavit. . . . Nunc autem . . . beneficiorum tuorum et antiquarum amicitiarum memor." — *Epist.* 86, ed. Jaffé. "Quia omnes milites Christi utriusque sexus tempestates et tribulationes infirmitatesque hujus sæculi despexerunt. . . . Qui pater et amator castæ virginitatis tuæ, qui te primevo tempore juventutis tuæ. . . . Ut quod in bona juventute cœpisti, in senectute bella ad gloriam Dei perficias. . . . Dominæ dilectissimæ et in amore Christi omnibus cæteris feminini sexus præferendæ sorori. . . . Bonifacius exiguus. . . . Fidem antiquam inter nos nunquam deficere scias." — *Epist.* 86, 88, ed. Jaffé.

This Abbess Bugga, who must not be confounded with the one quoted

As to the project of the pilgrimage to Rome, he will not pronounce either for or against it, but he begs her to wait the advice sent to her from Rome by their common friend, an abbess named Wethburga, who had gone there to seek that peace of contemplative life for which Bugga sighed, but had found only storms, rebellions, and the threat of a Saracenic invasion.[178]

The Anglo-Saxon monks who had accompanied the future martyr in his apostolic mission, rivalled their chief in the warmth of their expressions in their letters to their cloistered sisters. Lullius, who was to replace Boniface in the archiepiscopal see of Mayence, wrote along with two of his companions to the Abbess Cuneburga, a daughter of one of the Anglo-Saxon dynasties, telling her that she occupied the first place above all other women in the innermost sanctuary of their hearts.[179] The same Lullius wrote to the Abbess Eadburga, who was so dear to his master, begging her not to refuse him the sweetness of receiving letters from her, and to assure her that the spiritual brotherhood which united them made him capable of doing anything to please her.[180] There still remains to be quoted a letter from an anonymous monk to a nun equally unknown, which has had the honor of being preserved through all these ages, along with the letters of St. Boniface; a fact at which we rejoice, for it throws a pleasing light upon the tender and simple emotions which filled those honest, humble, and fervent hearts by whom Germany was won to the faith of Jesus Christ: — "N., unworthy of a truly close affection, to N., greeting and happiness in the Lord: Beloved sister, though the vast extent of the seas separate us a little, I am daily your neighbor in my memory. I entreat you not to forget the words that we have exchanged, and what we promised each other the day of my departure. I salute you, dearest;

above, survived Boniface; she is mentioned as *honorabilis abbatissa* in a letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the successor of Boniface (*Ep.* 113, ed. Jaffé). She is probably the same who made a pilgrimage to Rome, and who will be spoken of farther on.

[178] *Epist.* 88, ed. Jaffé.

[179] "Dominæ dilectissimæ Christique religiosissimæ abbatissæ, regalis prosapiæ generositate præditæ. . . . Agnoscere cupimus almitatis tuæ clementiam, quia te præ cæteris cunctis feminini sexus in cordis cubiculo cingimus amore." — *Epist.* 41, ed. Jaffé.

[180] "Et si quid mihi . . . imperare volueris, scit caritas ille quæ inter nos est copulata spiritali germanitate, id meam parvitatem totis nisibus implere velle. Iaterea rogo ut mihi litteras tuæ dulcedinis destinare non deneges.' — *Epist.* 75, ed. Jaffé.

live long, live happy, praying for me. I write you these lines not to impose my wishes arrogantly upon you, but humbly to ask for yours, as if you were my own sister, did I possess one." [181]

Tender and confidential as was the tone of the letters which arrived from Germany in the Anglo-Saxon cloisters, there seems to be something still more warm and intimate in the fragments which remain to us of those which were written in the cells of Winbourne, Minster, and many other monasteries, and which were sent from thence whenever a sure messenger presented himself, along with presents of books, vestments, spices, sacred linen, &c., to the monks engaged beyond the sea in the great work of the Teutonic missions.

One continually apparent feature in them, which we have already remarked, is an eager and unconquerable desire to travel, to go to Rome, notwithstanding the numerous and formidable obstacles which stood in the way of the pilgrimage, and the dangers of every kind to which women were exposed in undertaking it — dangers which Boniface and his companions had energetically pointed out. The last trace which remains to us of the exemplary activity of the illustrious Elfleda, Abbess of Whitby, who died in 714, after sixty years of monastic life, is a letter of recommendation addressed to the daughter of the king of Austrasia, who was abbess of a monastery near Treves, in favor of an English nun, whom she calls her daughter, as she had educated her from her youth; she had detained her as long as she could for the good of souls, but at last had permitted her to satisfy her ardent desire of visiting the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul.[182] One of the chief friends of St. Boniface, the Ab-

[181] "Intimæ dilectionis amore quamvis indignus. . . . Amantissima soror, licet longuscula alta marium æqualitate distam. . . . Sis memor, carissima, verborum nostrorum, quæ pariter pepigimus, quando profectus fueram. . . . Vale, vivens ævo longiore et vita feliciore, interpellans pro me. Hæc pauca ad te scripsi, non arroganter mea commendans, sed humiliter tua deposcens seu . . . propriæ germanæ nuper nanctæ. Vale." — *Epist.* 139, ed. Jaffé. This interesting production is unfortunately followed by an effusion in Latin verse much less admirable: —

> "Vale, Christi virguncula, Christi nempe tiruncula,
> Mihi cara magnopere atque gnara in opere," &c.

Cf. 96 and 97 of the same collection. Let us add that the same simple and tender familiarity between monks and nuns is found, five centuries after our Anglo-Saxons, in the interesting collection of letters from B. Jourdain de Saxe, second general of the Dominicans, to the nuns of St. Agnes of Bologne and to the B. Diana, their foundress, recently published by Père Bayonne, Paris and Lyons, Bauchu, 1865.

[182] *Epist.* 8, ed. Jaffé.

bess Bugga, who must not be confounded with her whom we have just mentioned, had not only the strength and privilege of accomplishing that journey, but also the happiness of meeting him at Rome, from whence she returned safe to resume the government of her community.[183] The three Buggas and the two Eadburgas.

A third Bugga, who is also called Eadburga, eagerly entertained the same desire, and expressed it in a long letter written to Boniface, jointly with her mother Eangytha, who was abbess of the monastery in which both lived. What was this monastery? Its situation is not ascertained, but it is probable that it was either Whitby or Hartlepool, or some other house situated on the rocks which overlook the Northern Sea: so entirely do the images employed both by the mother and daughter reveal a life accustomed to the emotions of a sea-shore. Both of them, while consulting him on their project, open their heart to him, and tell him of their trials; and through their abrupt and incoherent style and faulty Latin thus afford us a glimpse of the agitations and miseries which too often trouble the peace and light of the cloister. "Loving brother," they write, "brother in the spirit rather than in the flesh, and enriched by the gifts of the spirit, in these pages, which you see bathed by our tears, we come to confide to you alone, and with God alone for a witness, that we are overwhelmed by the troubles accumulated upon us, and by the tumult of secular affairs. When the foaming and stormy waves of the sea break against the rocks on the shore, when the breath of the furious winds has roused the breadth of ocean, as the keel of the boats is seen in the air, and the masts under water, so the boat of our souls is driven about by a whirlwind of griefs and calamities. We are in the house which is spoken of in the Gospel: 'The rain descended, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house.' (Matth. vii. 25, 27). What afflicts us above all is the recollection of our innumerable sins, and the absence of any really complete good work. And besides the care of our own souls, we must bear, which is harder still, that of all the souls of every age and of both sexes which have been confided to us, and of which we must render an account before the judgment-seat of Christ, not only of their actions, but also of their

[183] See the curious and interesting letter of Ethelbert II., King of Kent, to Boniface, to which we shall return later (*Epist.* 103, ed. Jaffé; 73 ed. Giles). It will there be seen that this Bugga was of the race of the Aescings: "Utpote consanguinitate propinquitatis nostræ admonita."

thoughts, which are known to God alone! To which must be added the daily toil of our domestic affairs, the discussion of all the quarrels which the enemy of every good takes pleasure in sowing among men in general, and especially among monks and in monasteries. And besides, we are tormented by our poverty, by the small size of our cultivated lands, and more still by the enmity of the king, who listens to all the accusations made against us by the envious; by the taxes laid on us for the service of the king, his queen, the bishop, the earl, and their satellites and servants, — things which would take too much space to enumerate, and are more easily imagined than described. To all these distresses must be added the loss of our friends and relations, who formed almost a tribe, and of whom none remain. We have neither son, brother, father, nor uncle: we have no more than an only daughter, deprived of everything she loved in the world except her mother, who is very old, and a son of her brother, who is also unfortunate, though without any fault of his, because the king hates our family. There remains, therefore, not one person in whom we can put our trust. God has taken all from us by different means. Some are dead in their country, and wait in their dark graves the day of the resurrection and the last judgment, the day when envy shall be overcome and consumed, and all mourning and pain shall disappear from the presence of the elect. Others have left their native shore to confide themselves to the plains of ocean, and to visit the tombs of the apostles and martyrs. For all these reasons, and for others which could not be told in a day, not even one of the long days of July or August, our life is a burden to us.

"Every being that is unhappy, and has lost confidence in himself, seeks a faithful friend to whom he can open his heart and pour forth all its secrets. Ah! how true is what they say, that nothing can be sweeter than to have some one to whom we can speak of everything as to ourselves. Now, we have sought for that faithful friend in whom we could have more confidence than in ourselves; who should regard our pains and distresses as his own; who should pity all our evils, and console them by his salutary counsels. Yes, we have sought him long. And at last we hope to have found in you this friend whom we have so long desired and eagerly hoped for.

"Oh that God would deign to carry us in the arms of His angel, as He did of old the prophet Habakkuk and the dea-

con Philip, into the far countries where you travel, and make us to hear the living word from your mouth, which would be sweeter to us than honey! But, since we do not deserve this, and that we are separated by land and sea, we will nevertheless use our confidence in you, brother Boniface, to tell you that for a long time we have desired, like so many of our kinsmen and friends, to visit that Rome which was once mistress of the world, to obtain the pardon of our sins. I above all, Eangytha, who am old, and consequently have more sins than others, I have this desire. I confided my plan formerly to Wala, who was then my abbess and spiritual mother, and to my daughter, who was then very young. But we know that there are many who disapprove our intention, because the canons enjoin that each should remain where she has made her vow, and give account of that vow to God. Troubled by this doubt, we pray you, both of us, to be our Aaron, and to present our prayers to God, that by your mediation He may show us what will be most useful for us, to remain at home, or to go on this holy pilgrimage. We entreat you to answer what we have written to you in a style so rustic and unpolished. We have no trust in those who glorify themselves in the sight of man, but we have much trust in your faith and charity to God and your neighbors. . . . Farewell, spiritual brother, faithful, amiable, and beloved with a pure and sincere love. . . . A friend is long sought, rarely found, and still more rarely preserved. Farewell; pray that our sins may not bring us misfortune." [184]

[184] "Amantissime frater, spiritalis magis quam carnalis, et spiritalium gratiarum munificentia magnificatus, tibi soli indicare voluimus et Deus solus testis est nobis, quas cernis interlitas lacrymis. . . . Tanquam spumosi maris vortices verrunt et vellunt undarum cumulos, conlisos saxis, quando ventorum violentia et procellarum tempestates sævissime enormum euripum impellunt et cymbarum carinæ sursum immutate et malus navis deorsum duratur, haut secus animarum nostrarum naviculæ. . . . Quas seminat omnium bonorum invisor; qui . . . inter omnes homines spargit, maxime per monasticos et monachorum contubernia. . . . Angit præterea paupertas et penuria rerum temporalium et angustia cespitis ruris nostris; et infestatio regalis. . . . Et ut dicitur, quid dulcius est quam habeas illum cum quo omnia possis loqui ut tecum? . . . Diu quæsivimus. Et confidimus quia invenimus in te illum amicum, quem cupivimus, et optavimus et speravimus. . . . Vale, frater spiritalis fidelissime atque amantissime et sincera et pura dilectione dilecte; . . . Amicus diu quæritur, vix invenitur, difficile servatur." — *Epist.* 14, ed. Jaffé. We have already quoted a letter in which Boniface replies to an Abbess Bugga on the subject of a pilgrimage to Rome (*Epist.* 88, ed. Jaffé). I do not think that this reply belongs to the letter I am about to quote, because it says nothing of the mother Eangytha, and because it is filled with various subjects of which there is no question in the letter of the mother and daughter.

The beginning of the friendship between Lioba and Boniface.

Let us now turn to the beautiful and learned Lioba (*die Liebe*, the beloved), and observe the means she took while still very young, from her convent at Winbourne, to make herself known to the great man who afterwards called her to his aid to introduce the light of the Gospel and monastic life among the German nations: —

"To the very reverend lord and bishop Boniface, beloved in Christ, his kinswoman Leobgytha,[185] the last of the servants of God, health and eternal salvation. I pray your clemency to deign to recollect the friendship which united you to my father Tinne, an inhabitant of Wessex, who departed from this world eight years ago, that you may pray for the repose of his soul. I also recommend to you my mother Ebba, your kinswoman, as you know better than me, who still lives in great suffering, and has been for long overwhelmed with her infirmities. I am their only daughter; and God grant, unworthy as I am, that I might have the honor of having you for my brother, for no man of our kindred inspires me with the same confidence as you do. I have taken care to send you this little present, not that I think it worthy your attention, but that you may remember my humbleness, and that, notwithstanding the distance of our dwellings, the tie of true love may unite us for the rest of our days. Excellent brother, what I ask you with earnestness is, that the buckler of your prayers may defend me from the poisoned arrows of the enemy. I beg of you also to excuse the rusticity of this letter, and that your courtesy will not refuse the few words of answer which I so much desire. You will find below some lines which I have attempted to compose according to the rules of poetic art, not from self-confidence, but to exercise the mind which God has given me, and to ask your counsel. I have learned all that I know from Eadburga,[186] my mistress, who gives herself to profound study of the divine law. Farewell: live a long and happy life; intercede for me.

"May the Almighty Judge, who made the earth,
And glorious in His Father's kingdom reigns,

[185] She had also two names in Anglo-Saxon, Truthgeba and Leobgytha; but she received the surname of Lioba or Licba, under which she is generally known, because, according to her biographer, she was beloved by every one. — Zell, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

[186] This, then, is a third Eadburga, who was mistress of of the novices at Winbourne, and must not be confounded either with Eadburga, Abbess of Thanet, or with Eadburga, surnamed Bugga, both of whom appear in St Boniface's correspondence.

Preserve your chaste fire warm as at its birth,
Till time for you shall lose its rights and pains." [187]

Cena the Unworthy.

Beside the celebrated Lioba, let us quote an unknown nun, who calls herself Cena the Unworthy — *Pontifici Bonifacio Christi amatori Cene indigna* — but who writes to the great apostle with a proud and original simplicity which goes to my heart, and which I thank the ancient compilers for having preserved along with the letters of the great apostle. "I confess, my dearest," she says, "that, seeing you too seldom with the eyes of my body, I cease not to look at you with the eyes of my heart. . . . And this I declare, that to the end of my life I shall always recollect you in my prayers. I entreat you, by our affection and our mutual faith, to be faithful to my littleness, as I shall be faithful to your greatness, and to help me by your prayers, that the Almighty may dispose of my life according to His will. If one of your people ever comes to this land, let him not disdain to have recourse to my poverty; and if I can render any service, either spiritual or temporal, to you or to others, I will do it with all my might to the great profit of my soul." [188]

This letter was addressed to Boniface, then a bishop, very probably by one of those whom he had transplanted from England into Germany.

Egburga the Desolate.

Let us now listen to another Anglo-Saxon maid, a contemporary of his youth, Egburga, whom some suppose to have been that daughter of an East Anglian king who was the abbess and friend of St. Guthlac.[189] She wrote to Boniface while he was still abbot of an English monastery, to confide to him her private griefs — "To the holy abbot and true friend, Winifred, full of knowledge and religion, Egburga, the last of his pupils, eternal greeting in the Lord. Since I have known the blessing of your affection, it has remained in my soul like an odor of incomparable sweetness. And though I may be henceforward deprived of your temporal presence, I do not cease

718-722.

[187] I reprint the translation from the excellent work of Ozanam, *La Civilisation Chrétienne chez les Francs*, p. 226, from which I shall have many other quotations to make if I am enabled to continue my work, and to relate the conquest of Germany by the Anglo-Saxon monks.

[188] "Jam fateor tibi, carissime . . . et hoc tibi notum facio, quod usque ad finem vitæ meæ te semper in meis orationibus recordor, et te rogo per creditam amicitiam ut meæ parvitati fidelis sis, sicut in te credo." — *Epist.* 94, ed. Jaffé.

[189] See p. 588 of this volume.

to embrace you as a sister. You were already my kind brother; you are now my father. Since death, bitter and cruel, has snatched from me my brother Oshere whom I loved more than anybody in the world, I prefer you to all other men. Neither night nor day passes that I do not recall your lessons. Believe me, for God is my witness, I love you with a supreme love. I am sure that you will never forget the friendship which united you to my brother. I am good for very little, and much inferior to him in worth and in knowledge; but I yield nothing to him in my affection for you. Time has passed since then; but the heavy cloud of sorrow has never left me. On the contrary, the longer I live the more I suffer. I have proved the truth of what is written, that the love of man brings grief, but the love of Christ lights the heart. My heart has received a new wound by the loss of my dearest sister Wethburga. She has suddenly disappeared from my side — she with whom I grew up, who has sucked the same milk, as I call Jesus to witness."

Here the poor nun, no doubt desiring to show to her ancient master that she was not unworthy of his lessons, proceeds to quote Virgil: —

"Crudelis ubique
Luctus, ubique pavor, et plurima mortis imago." [190]

But she quotes wrongly without perceiving it, as has been the case with two or three terrible solecisms which occur in the preceding part of her letter.[191] After which she continues: —

"I should have wished to die had God permitted it. But it is not cruel death, it is a separation still more cruel which has withdrawn us from each other; she to happiness, as I believe, but I to misfortune, since she has left me as a sort of pledge to the service of the world, while she whom I love so much is now shut up, according to what I hear, in I know not what prison in Rome.[192] But the love of Christ which

[190] *Æncid*, ii. 369, 370.

[191] "Ego autem licet scentia *tardiora* et meritis *viliora* illo sim, tamen erga tuæ caritatis obsequium dispar non sum." I shall perhaps be reproached for lingering over these minutiæ. Let it be so; all that relates to the history of the soul, especially in the cradle of the faith, attracts me irresistibly. What is more touching than these imperfections of style in a classic tongue from the pen of a half-civilized woman, who at all risks must express to the heart of a friend the emotions which fill her own?

[192] "Me vero infelicem, quasi quoddam depositum, huic sæculo servire permisit, sciens enim quantum illam dilexi, quantum amavi, quam nunc, ut audio, Romana carcer includit." — *Epist.* 13. The anonymous author of

blossoms in her heart is stronger than all bonds. She will ascend the strait and narrow way, but I am left lying in the depths, enchained by the law of the flesh. In the day of judgment she will sing joyously with the Lord, 'I was in prison, and thou visitedst me.' You too, in that day, will sit where the twelve apostles sit, and will be proud, like a glorious chief, of having led before the tribunal of the eternal King so many souls won by your labors. But I in this valley of tears weep for my sins which have made me unworthy of such company.

"For this reason the seaman, beaten by the tempest, does not long to enter the port, nor do the parched fields thirst for rain, nor the mother wandering along the winding shore in the agonies of suspense await her son, with more anxiety than that I feel in my desire once more to enjoy your presence. My sins prevent it, and I am in despair. But, sinner as I am, prostrated at your feet, I implore you from the bottom of my heart — I cry to you from the ends of the earth — O blessed lord, that you will carry me to the height of the rock of your prayers, for you are my hope and my citadel against the enemy visible and invisible. To console my great grief, to calm the waves of my trouble, to give some support to my weakness, send me help, either in the form of holy relics or at least by words from your hand, however short, that I may always look at them as at yourself." [193]

Thus we see how warm still were the natural affections in these impetuous hearts, without wronging the new bonds of friendship and fraternity which religious life, with its active and extended connections in the spiritual order, developed in

Notes on St. Hilda and St. Bega concludes from this passage that Egburga had succeeded her sister Wethburga as abbess, and that it is the latter who is alluded to in the letter to St. Boniface as being already fixed at Rome. This conjecture appears probable enough. The two sisters, with an elder one, all three daughters of a king of East Anglia, would thus have been successively abbesses of Hackness. See genealogical table ix., p. 576

[193] "Abbate (*sic*) sancto veroque amico . . . Wynfrido Egberg ultima discipulorum seu discipularum tuarum. . . . Caritatis tuæ copiam fateor; ast dum per interiorum hominem gustavi, quasi quiddam mellitæ suavitatis meis visceribus hic sapor insidet. Et licet interim . . . ab aspectu corporali visualiter defraudata sim, sororis tamen semper amplexibus collum tuum constrinxero. . . . Crede mihi, Deo teste, quia summo te complector amore. . . . Sed . . . ut scriptum est: *Amor hominis deducit dolorem, amor autem Christi illuminat cor.* . . . Non sic tempestate jactatus nauta portum desiderat, non sic sitientia imbres arva desiderant, non sic curvo litore anxia filium mater expectat, quam ut ego visibus vestris fruere cupio. . . . Vel paucula saltim per scripta beatitudinis tuæ verba, ut in illis tuam presentiam semper habeam." — *Epist.* 13.

them. The invaluable collection of the Epistles of St. Boniface encloses several letters from Anglo-Saxon nuns to their brothers, always in Latin, and in very unclassical Latin, but all bearing the marks of tender and sincere affection. "To my only and beloved brother," writes one of these, who describes herself as the least of the servants of Christ. "How, dearest brother, can you make me wait for your coming so long? Do you never think that I am alone in the world? that no other brother, no other relation, comes to see me? You do this, perhaps, because I have not been able to do all I wished for your service; but how can you so forget the rights of charity and kindred? Oh, my brother, my dear brother, why do you thus by your absence fill with sadness my days and nights? Do you not know that no other living soul is more dear to me than you are? I cannot say in writing all that I would: and, besides, I feel that you have ceased to care for your poor little sister." [194]

Lament of a nun over her brother's absence.

The name of the writer of these words is unknown; and the name, but nothing more, is known of another nun whose only brother was among the companions of Boniface. She would not be comforted for his absence, and poured out her sadness in writing to her brother with a poetic and pathetic voice which recalls the wail of St. Radegund, two centuries earlier, in her convent at Poitiers, when thinking of the troubles of her youth.[195] Our Anglo-Saxon nun also attempted to interpret in Latin verse the sorrows of her heart. But her verses are far from having the merit of those which Fortunatus placed at the service of the abbess-queen of St. Croix. Her prose is at once more correct and more touching. "To Balthard, my

[194] "Fratri unico atque amantissimo . . . N. H., ultima ancillarum Dei. . . . Quare non vis cogitare quod ego sola in hac terra? . . . O frater, o frater mi, cur potes mentem parvitatis meæ assidue mœrore, fletu atque tristitia die noctuque caritatis tuæ absentia affligere? . . . Jam certum teneo, quod tibi cura non est de mea parvitate." — *Epist.* 144, ed. Jaffé.

[195] See vol. i. p. 489. M. Zell believes this Bertgytha to be the same as the nun of that name who accompanied Lioba to Germany, and that it is from thence she writes to her brother; but this supposition is irreconcilable with the text of the letters, where it is said that the sister had been abandoned very young by her parents, while the only historian who speaks of the companions of Lioba says that Berchtgyd went to Germany with her mother, and that both became abbesses in Thuringia. — Othlo, *Vita S. Bonifacii*, ed. Jaffé, p. 490. The messenger who bore the correspondence between the brother and sister was Aldred or Aldraed, who carried from Germany to England the messages of the deacon Lullius, the chief assistant of Boniface (*Epist.* 78), from which it has been supposed that the brother of Berchtgyd might have been employed on the same mission.

only brother, loved in the Lord, and more loved than any one in the world. . . . I have received with tender gratitude the message and gifts which you have sent me by your faithful messenger Aldred. I will do, with the help of God, everything you tell me, but on the condition that you will come back and see me. I cannot exhaust the fountain of my tears when I see or hear that others meet their friends again. Then I recall that I was forsaken in my youth by my parents, and left alone here. Nevertheless I have not been forsaken by God, and I bless His almighty mercy that He has preserved your life as well as mine. And now, dearest brother, I implore and beseech you, deliver my soul from this sadness, which is very hurtful to me. I declare to you that even if you only staid with me one day and left me the next, grief would vanish from my heart. But if it is disagreeable to you to grant my request, I take God to witness that never at least shall our tenderness be betrayed by me. Perhaps you would prefer that I should go to you instead of awaiting you here. For myself, I should willingly go where the bodies of our parents rest, to end my life, and to rise from that spot to the country of those beings whose peace and joy are eternal. . . . Farewell, dear servant of the cross, beloved of your sister; keep your good fame forever."

On other occasions she writes again: "My soul is weary of life, because of my love for you. I am here alone, forsaken, deprived of all kindred. My father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord hath taken me up. Between you and me there is that gulf of great waters of which Scripture speaks; but we are united by love, for true love is never overcome, neither by space nor time. At the same time I acknowledge that I am always sad. My soul is troubled even in sleep, for love is strong as death. Now I beseech you, my beloved brother, come to me, or let me go to you, that I may see you again before I die, for the love of you will never leave my heart. My brother, your only sister greets you in Christ. I pray for you as for myself, day and night — every hour and every minute. . . . I pray, weeping and stretched on the earth, that you may live happy here below, and that you may become a saint." [196]

[196] "Dilectissimo fratri in Domino et in carne carissimo Balthardo Berthgyth. . . . Et nunc, frater mi, adjuro te atque deprecor, ut auferas tristitiam ab anima mea: quia valde nocet mihi. . . . Sin autem displicet tibi implere petitionem meam, tunc Deum testem invoco, quod in me nunquam fit derelicta dilectio nostra. . . . " —

I pity those who, either from sceptical contempt for all religious tradition, or modern rigorism, can listen with indifference or contempt to the cries of love and grief which sprang more than a thousand years ago from the depth of those Anglo-Saxon cloisters, and which attest, before and after so many other witnesses, the immortal vitality of the affections and wants of the human heart, in all climates and all forms of society. What can be more touching than these outbursts of human tenderness amid the rude kindred of the Anglo-Saxons, and under the rugged bark of their wild nature? What more interesting than the effort of these souls to interpret, in a language which they supposed more cultivated than their own, the emotions which moved them, and, above all, to renew themselves continually in the truths and precepts of the Christian faith, which had for so short a time taken the place of the worship of their fathers among them! For my own part, I listen, across past centuries, to these yearnings of the heart, to these voices of the soul, with interest a thousand times greater than to the victories and conquests which have absorbed the attention of historians; and I offer up my heartfelt thanksgivings to the biographers of the saints and the editors of their works for having infolded in their volumes, like flowers in an herbal, these early traces of human love and the storms that assail it.

"It would be singular," says the austere and tender Lacordaire, "if Christianity, founded on the love of God and men, should end in withering up the soul in respect to everything which was not God. . . . Self-denial, far from diminishing love, nourishes and increases it. The ruin of love is self-love, not the love of God; and no one ever met on earth with affections stronger and purer, more ardent, more tender, and more lasting, than those to which the saints gave up their hearts, at once emptied of themselves and filled with God." [197]

"Have, crucicola care, salutate a sorore;
Fine tenus feliciter famam serva simpliciter. . . .

"Tædet animam meam vitæ meæ propter amorem fraternitatis nostræ. . . Multæ sunt aquarum congregationes inter me et te. . . . Tamen caritate jungamur; quia vera caritas nunquam locorum limite frangitur. . . . Neque per somnium mente quiesco.

"Vale vivens feliciter ut sis sanctus simpliciter. . . . Precibus peto profusis fletibus; solo tenus sæpissima." — *Epist.* 148, 149, ed. Jaffé.

[197] LACORDAIRE, *Lettres à des Jeunes Gens.* Toulouse, Nov. 9, 1852.

VI.

But the storms of the heart, like the storms of life, have an end which is death — that death which delivers from everything — which crowns and sometimes explains everything. How did our Anglo-Saxon nuns die? As far as we can make out, they died happy and even joyous, without contradicting or giving up the tender affections which had agitated their hearts and animated their life. It would be a mistake to suppose that they only, or that even they the first, among the monastic classes of old, kept up those beautiful and holy friendships to their last days. St. Gregory the Great has preserved to us the recollection of the noble Roman, Galla, daughter of the patrician Symmachus, who became a nun in a monastery near the Basilica of St. Peter, and being attacked by a fatal illness had a vision three days before her death. The prince of the apostles appeared to her in a dream and announced to her that her sins were pardoned. She would not content herself with that supreme grace, but ventured to ask from her holy protector that another nun, sister Benedicta, whom she loved most in the community, might die with her. The apostle answered that her friend should not die at the same time, but should follow her in thirty days. The next morning Galla told the superior what she had seen and heard, and everything happened as she said. The two friends at the end of a month were united by death.[198]

Death does not end the friendship of the cloister.

St. Galla.

The great Abbess Hilda, of whom we have spoken so much, and who was for thirty years the light and oracle of Northumberland, had also in her community a favorite nun, or one, at least, who loved her, says Bede, with a great love. This nun had not the happiness of dying at the same time as her friend. But when the holy abbess, who had been consumed for seven years by a cruel fever, which did not for a single day interrupt the exercise of her spiritual maternity, came at last to the end of her trials — when she had given up her last breath in the midst of her daughters

Hilda and her friend.

[198] "Gothorum temporibus, hujus urbis nobilissima puella. . . . Ex amore sumens audaciam . . . quja quamdam sanctimonialem feminam in eodem monasterio præ cæteris diligebat . . . subjunxit: Rogo ut soror Benedicta mecum veniat. Cui ille respondit: Non, sed illa talis veniat tecum: hæc vero, quam petis, die erit trigesimo secutura." — S. Gregor., *Dial.*, l. IV., ap. *Brev. Roman. Off Propr. Cler. Rom.* die 5 Oct.

collected round her bed to hear the last exhortation, in which she besought them to keep the peace of the Gospel between them and all men,— her friend, who was at that moment detained in the novitiate, in a distant corner of the monastic lands, had the consolation of seeing in a dream the soul of Hilda led to heaven by a shining train of angels.[199]

Ethelburga and her friend.

Læta mortem vidit: she saw death with joy. These words, spoken by Bede of St. Hilda, seem to have been applicable to all the female saints, and even to all the nuns, whose recollection he has preserved to us. There was one at Barking, who, after having been for long the humble and zealous assistant of the first abbess, Ethelburga, was warned of the death of that abbess, her friend, by a vision, in which she saw her dear Ethelburga wrapt in a shroud which shone like the sun, and raised to heaven by golden chains which represented her good works. Deprived of her spiritual mother, she lived for nine years in the most cruel sufferings, in order, says Bede, that the furnace of this daily tribulation might consume all the imperfection that remained among so many virtues. At last paralysis assailed all her members, and even her tongue. Three days before her death she recovered sight and speech: she was heard to exchange some words with an invisible visitor. It was her dearest Ethelburga, who came to announce to her her deliverance. "I can scarcely bear this joy," said the sick woman; and the following night, freed at once from sickness and from the bondage of the flesh, she entered into everlasting joy.[200]

[199] "In quo toto tempore nunquam . . . commissum sibi gregem et publice et privatim docere prætermittebat. . . . Septimo infirmitatis anno . . . circa galli cantum, percepto viatico sacrosanctæ communionis, cum accersitis ancillis Christi . . . de servanda eas invicem, immo cum omnibus pace evangelica admoneret: inter verba exhortationis læta mortem vidit. . . . Nunciavit matrem illarum omnium Hild abbatissam . . . se aspectante cum luce immensa ducibus angelis ad æternæ lumina lucis . . . ascendisse. . . . Ferunt quod eadem nocte . . . cuidam virginum Deo devotarum quæ illam immenso amore diligebat, obitus illius in visione apparuerit."— Bede, iv. 23.

[200] "Christi famula Torchtgyd . . . adjutrix disciplinæ regularis eidem matri, minores docendo vel castigando curabat. . . . Vidit quasi corpus hominis, quod esset sole clarius, sindone involutum in sublime ferri . . . quasi funibus auro clarioribus. . . . Per annos novem pia Redemptoris nostri provisione fatigata, ut quicquid in ea vitii sordidantis inter virtutes per ignorantium vel incuriam resedisset, totum hoc cominus diutine tribulationis excoqueret. . . . *Nequaquam hæc læta ferre queo.* . . . Interrogata cum quo loqueretur: *Cum carissima,* inquit, *matre mea Ædilberge.* . . . Soluta carnis simul et infirmitatis vinculis, ad æternæ gaudia salutis intravit." — Bede, iv. 9.

A monument which is called the Maidens' Tomb is still shown in the fine church of Beverley; it is the grave of two daughters of an earl, a benefactor of the great Abbey of St. John, who had taken the veil there. On Christmas night, according to the legend, they were the last to leave the midnight mass, and did not reappear in their stalls. After the service of the following night, the abbess, made anxious by their absence, went to look for them, and found them asleep in each other's arms. When they woke it was found that they supposed themselves to have slept only an hour, and had dreamt of paradise. They went down to the choir, and there, kneeling before the abbess, after having asked and received her benediction, died, still embracing each other.[201]

The daughters of the Earl at Beverley.

One of the most celebrated heathens of our century, Goethe, died asking for light. "More light!" these were, it is said, his last words. They recur to the mind involuntarily, when we read of the happy and joyful death of these virgins, sweet and full of light, who prepared, in the depths of their cloisters now despised or forgotten, the conversion of the country of Goethe. Light above all, a heavenly and supernatural light, floods over their deathbeds and their tombs.

Deathbeds full of light.

These visions full of light, and these happy deaths, seem to have been specially accorded to our Anglo-Saxons, and not only to those who died upon their native soil, but also to those who had passed their lives in foreign cloisters. At Faremoutier, in France, the daughter of a king of Kent, Earcongotha, of whom we have already spoken,[202] had edified all the inhabitants by the miracles of her virtue. Being warned of her approaching end, she went from cell to cell in the infirmary of the monastery asking for the prayers of the sick nuns. She died during the following night at the first glimpse of dawn. At the same hour the monks who occupied another part of the double monastery heard a sound like the noise of a multitude, who to the sound of heavenly music invaded the monastery.

The daughter of the King of Kent at Faremoutier.

[201] Earl Puch, the father of these two sisters, is mentioned by Bede (v. 4), who describes the miraculous cure of his wife by St. John of Beverley. One of their daughters was named Yolfrida; the narrative states that she became a nun at Beverley, and died there in 742. "Puch dedit cum filia manerium de Walkington." Puch held the manor of South Burton, two miles from Beverley. — DUGDALE, *Monasticon*, i. 170; MABILLON, *Act. SS. O. S. B.* vol. iii. p. 413.

[202] See above, pp. 664 and 671.

When they went out to see what it was, they found themselves in a flood of miraculous light, in the midst of which the soul of the foreign princess ascended to heaven.[203]

And the lay-sister Willesinda.

In the same cloister at Faremoutier, where the daughter of the kings of Kent, the grandchild of Clovis and Ethelbert, thus lived and died, a humble lay-sister, also an Anglo-Saxon, had, like her royal companion, a joyous presentiment of her death, and a shining train of angels to escort her to heaven. One day when Willesinda (as she was called) worked in the garden of the monastery with the other lay-sisters, she said to them, "One of those who cultivate this spot is about to die; let us then be ready, that our tardiness may not injure us in eternity." They asked her in vain which one of them it should be. Soon after, she fell ill, and during all her sickness she looked up to heaven with eyes shining with happiness, repeating long passages from holy Scripture, though she had never learned them by heart. Like the cowherd-poet whom the Abbess Hilda brought into monastic life and to a knowledge of the Bible, she astonished all present by repeating to them the Old and New Testament in their order.

After this she began to sing with wonderful sweetness the services as she had heard them sung by the priests. Then all at once she said to her amazed companions, "Room, room, for those who are coming!" No one was seen to enter, but conversation was heard, which the sick woman kept up, bowing her head with an expression of respect and joy. "Welcome, my dear ladies, welcome," she said. "To whom are you speaking?" they asked her. "What!" she answered, "do you not recognize your sisters who have left this community for heaven? Look, Anstrude, there is Ansilda, your own sister, who has been long dead. She is clothed with the white robe of the elect." After this she breathed her last, and the choir of angels was immediately heard coming forth to meet the saved soul.[204]

[203] "Magnarum fuit virgo virtutum. . . . Hujus multa ab incolis loci illius solent opera virtutum et signa miraculorum usque hodie narrari. . . . Cœpit circuire in monasterio casulas infirmarum Christi famularum. . . . Ipsa autem nocte . . . incipiente aurora . . . multi de fratribus . . . sonitum quasi plurimæ multitudinis monasterium ingredientis; mox egressi dignoscere quid esset, viderunt lucem cœlitus emissam fuisse permaximam, quæ sanctam illam animam . . . ad æterna gaudia ducebat. . . . Tantæ fragrantia suavitatis ab imis ebullivit, ut cunctis qui adstabant fratribus ac sororibus, quasi opobalsami cellaria esse viderentur aperta." — Bede, iii. 8.

[204] "Quædam ex genere Saxonum Willesinda nomine, . . . quadam die dum in hortum intra monasterii septa laboraret, cum sodalibus locuta est:

Vision of the shining shroud at Barking.

But it was especially among the learned ladies of Barking, in the monastery which had made so warm a response to the classical teachings of Aldhelm and Boniface, that death was sweet and radiant. During the great pestilence of 664, which so cruelly desolated the new-born Church of England, the nuns went out one night from their church, at the end of matins, to pray at the grave of the monks who had preceded them into the other world, when all at once they saw the entire sky lighted up and cover them all as with a radiant shroud. They were so terrified that the hymn they were singing died on their lips. This light, which was more brilliant than that of the sun, guided them to the burying-place in which they were themselves to rest, and then disappeared; and they understood that it showed them at once the heaven which awaited their souls, and the spot of earth in which their bodies were to await the day of resurrection.[205]

The virgin called by the child.

Among those who died in so great a number during this fatal year, there are two whose humble memory the Anglo-Saxon historian has not scorned to mingle with his narrative of the political and military events of Essex and East Anglia. One of them was still in perfect health, when she was told that a little child, who had been received and taken care of by the sisters, had just died, and with its last breath had called her thrice, "Edith! Edith! Edith!" Immediately she lay down on her bed, and died the same day, to follow her innocent forerunner to heaven.[206]

Cito a nobis quæ in hac area excolimus una itura est. . . . Cœpit læta ad cœlum vultus referre, et ignotas sibi dudum scripturarum paginas enarrare, exorsaque a principio libros Moysis per ordinem recitare, Evangeliique vitalia sacramenta ac Apostolica post veterum documenta narrare. Omnesque deinceps scripturas ex ordine memorare. . . . Hilari vultu, capiteque inclinato dixit: Benedicite dominæ meæ, benedicite dominæ meæ. Inquirentesque quæ adstabant quibus salutem præmitteret, respondit: Non cernitis sorores vestras quæ de vestro collegio migraverunt ad cœlos? Quærentesque illæ si agnosceret, increpanti voce ad unam earum Ansitrudem nomine loquitur: Vel tu, inquit, non agnoscis sororem tuam Ansildem, quæ dudum ad cœlos migravit candidatarum choris insertam." — *Vita S. Burgundofaræ*, c. vii., ap. Mabillon, *Act. SS. O. S. B.*, vol. ii. p. 425.

[205] "Egressæ de oratorio famulæ Christi . . . ecce subito lux emissa cœlitus, veluti linteum magnum . . . tanto eas stupore perculit, ut etiam canticum quod canebant tremefactæ intermitterent. Ipse splendor emissæ lucis, in cujus comparatione sol meridianus videri possit obscurus. . . . Ut nulli esset dubium, quin ipsa lux quæ animas famularum Christi esset ducturа vel susceptura in cœlis, etiam corporibus earum," &c. — Bede, iv. 7.

[206] "Puer trium circiter annorum . . . qui propter infantilem adhuc ætatem in virginum Deo dedicatarum solebat cella nutriri ibique medicari. . . . Clamavit . . . proprio eam nomine quasi præsentem alloquens, Eadgyd,

The extinguished lamp.

Another, who was very young, but had been long ill, and was now in extremity, commanded those who watched her to carry away the lamp. "Put it out — put it out," she said, without ceasing, though she was not obeyed. "You suppose me mad, but I am not mad, and I tell you that I see this house full of such a light that your lamp troubles me with its obscure glimmer." Afterwards, when nobody would listen to her, she resumed: "Light your lamps then, and keep them as long as you please. But as for me, I have no need of your light; mine is elsewhere, and at dawn it will come for me." At dawn she was dead.[207]

VII.

History has retained but these few names, and it is not without difficulty that even these can be gleaned from chronicles and legends. The veil of forgetfulness and indifference has fallen between us and the distant centuries. That great fire, lighted by faith and charity in the souls of so many new and fervent Christians, is now extinguished: a few feeble rays scarcely reach us through the night of ages. That great garden of fragrant flowers, of blessed and glorious fruit, is now seen and enjoyed only by God; scarcely does a passing breath waft to us the faint lingerings of its perfume. Myriads of souls, candid and worthy, simple and delicate, sweet and fervent, which must have peopled these immense and numberless monasteries of old, will never be known to us! How many young and touching lives are thus buried in the darkness of forgetfulness, until the day when before the assembled universe they shall shine with the brightness of everlasting glory!

But in those distant ages they formed, for the honor and consolation of their country and the Church, a great army, numerous, hardy, and dauntless, bearing the glorious ensigns of sacrifice with magnanimous serenity and humble fervor.

Eadgyd, Eadgyd. . . . Ipso quo vocata est die . . . illum qui se vocavit ad regnum cœleste secuta est." — BEDE, iv. 8.

[207] "Cœpit subito circa mediam noctem clamare petens ut lucernam . . . extingueretur; quod cum frequenti voce repeteret. . . . Scio quod me hæc insana mente loqui arbitramini. . . . Vere dico vobis quod domum hanc tanta luce impletam esse perspicio, ut vestra illa lucerna mihi omnimodis esse videatur obscura. . . . Accendite ergo lucernam illam quamdiu vultis, attamen scitote quia non est mea; nam mea lux, incipiente aurora, mihi adventura est." — *Ibid.*

They confessed victoriously before the new-born Christianity and the beaten-back barbarism of their age, as their sisters in the present time confess, in the face of our over-proud civilization, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the atonements of suffering, and the immortal empire of the soul over inferior nature.

In all these noble maids, betrothed to God, there appears a sort of courage and strength which is above their sex. It is the special attribute of monastic life to transfigure human nature, by giving to the soul that which is almost always wanting to it in ordinary existence. It inspires the young virgin with an element of manfulness which withdraws her from the weaknesses of nature, and makes her at the necessary moment a heroine; but a soft and tender heroine, rising from the depths of humility, obedience, and love, to reach the height of the most generous flights, and to attain everything that is most powerful and light-giving in human courage. It fills the heart of the true monk and true priest with treasures of intelligent compassion, of unlimited tenderness, of gentleness unmixed with laxness, and of an unremitting patience such as the heart of woman alone seems capable of containing. And sometimes to both, to the bride of God and to His minister, to the heroine of charity and to the master of doctrine and preaching, it adds by a supernatural gift the incomparable charm of childhood, with its artless and endearing candor; then may be seen upon a living countenance that simplicity in beauty, and that serenity in strength, which are the most lovely array of genius and virtue. Thus it happens by times that all that is most grand and pure in the three different types of humanity, the man, the woman, and the child, is found combined in one single being, which accomplishes all that a soul can do here below to rise from its fall, and to render itself worthy of the God who has created and saved it.[208]

Vigorous character of the most part of the Saxon nuns.

I speak in the present tense, for all this exists still, and is found and repeated every day in the bosom of our modern civilization.

Every trace of the ancient world of which we have been endeavoring to seize an impression, has

All the ancient world has

[208] Aubrey de Vere, *Thoughts on St. Gertrude.* Cf. T. W. Allies, *The Formation of Christendom*, 1865, Part I., Lect. 6, *Creation of Virginal Life.*

perished except the army of sacrifice.

disappeared — everything has perished or changed, except the army of sacrifice. The vast and magnificent edifice of the ancient Catholic world has crumbled hopelessly to pieces. There will rise, and already, indeed, there does rise, a new world, which, like the ancient, will have its own greatness and its own littleness. But that of which we have just told the history has lasted, still lasts, and will endure forever.

Twelve centuries after the Anglo-Saxon maids whose devotion we have related, the same hand falls upon our homes, upon our desolate hearts, and tears away from us our daughters and sisters. Never since Christianity existed have such sacrifices been more numerous, more magnanimous, more spontaneous, than now. Every day since the commencement of this century, hundreds of beloved creatures have come forth from castles and cottages, from palaces and workshops, to offer unto God their heart, their soul, their virgin innocence, their love and their life. Every day among ourselves, maidens of high descent and high heart, and others with a soul higher than their fortune, have vowed themselves, in the morning of life, to an immortal husband.

They are the flower of the human race — a flower still sweet with the morning dew, which has reflected nothing but the rays of the rising sun, and which no earthly dust has tarnished — an exquisite blossom which, scented from far, fascinates with its pure fragrance, at least for a time, even the most vulgar souls. They are the flower, but they are also the fruit; the purest sap, the most generous blood of the stock of Adam; for daily these heroines win the most wonderful of victories, by the manliest effort which can raise a human creature above all earthly instincts and mortal ties.

Have you seen in March or April a child breathing in the first fresh breath of nature, the first gleam of admiration lightening in his bright eyes as they meet the gleam of awakening life in the woods and fields? There does the spring-time of life meet with the spring-time of nature, and to witness this meeting is a delight and a charm. But still more enchanting and more enrapturing by far, a rapture by which the soul is borne away to the utmost height of human emotion, is the sight of a virgin creature already budding into womanhood, radiant with youth and beauty, who turns away from all the fragrance of life to breathe only the breath, and look only towards the glories, of heaven.

What a scene is this! and where can one be found which manifests more clearly the divine nature of the Church, or which throws more entirely into the shade the miseries and stains with which its heavenly splendor is sometimes veiled?

Number and persevering character of vocations in the present time.

But, let us again repeat, this sight is afforded to us everywhere, not only in our old and unhealthy Europe, but in that America[269] which all generous spirits regard with hope and confidence. Wherever the Gospel is preached, wherever a crucifix is raised, everywhere does Christ, with His irresistible arm, pluck and uproot these earthly flowers to transplant them nearer to heaven.

Spoilers and oppressors may in vain resume their persecutions, which are daily predicted and provoked by the writers of revolutionary Cæsarism. Devoted and outlawed chastity will resume its task. In the garrets or cellars of the palaces inhabited by the triumphant masters of the future, over their heads or under their feet, virgins will be found who shall swear to Jesus Christ to belong only to Him, and who will keep their vow, if necessary, at the cost of their life.

In this age of laxity and universal languidness, these gentle victors have kept the secret of strength, and in the weakness of their sex, let it once again be repeated, they exhibit the masculine and persevering energy which is wanting in us, to attack in front and to subdue the egotism, cowardice, and sensuality of our time and of all times. They accomplish this task with a chaste and triumphant hardihood. All that is noble and pure in human nature is led to the fight against all our baseness, and to the help of all our miseries. Speak not of the charms of a contemplative life, of the peaceful joys of meditation and solitude. These are but the lot of few. Nowadays the great self-devoted crowd throws itself into quite another path. They rush forth to the rescue of the most repulsive and tedious infirmities of poor human nature, lavishing upon them unwearied cares; they swarm wherever they are wanted to cultivate the deserts of igno-

[269] "We are penetrated with the most profound respect for those holy virgins who fill our religious communities. We fulfil one of the pleasantest of duties in giving public witness to the virtue and heroism of those Christian maidens, whose lives exhale the sacred odor of Jesus Christ, and who, by their devotion and their spirit of sacrifice, have contributed more perhaps than any other cause to produce a happy change in the minds of those estranged from our faith." — *Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States, assembled in full Council at Baltimore*, Oct. 21, 1866.

rance and of childish stupidity, often so intractable and restive. Braving all disgusts, all repugnance, all denunciations and ingratitudes, they come by thousands, with dauntless courage and patience, to win, caress, and soothe every form of suffering and of poverty.

And, along with their strength, they have light, prudence, and true insight. They understand life without having experienced it. Who has taught them all these sad secrets? Who has taught these beings, at once so pure and so impassioned, at an age when the heart begins to be consumed by an insatiable thirst for human sympathy and human love, that such a thirst will never be satisfied in this world? Who has revealed to them the disgraceful frailty of earthly affections, even of the noblest and sweetest, the fondest and most deeply rooted, even of those which believed themselves everlasting, and held the greatest place in the hearts out of which they have miserably perished? Nothing but a divine instinct which frees them by withdrawing them from us. They are delivered from that withering amazement of the soul which meets disappointment, betrayal, and scorn, instead of love, and sometimes, after so many struggles and so many delusions, the silence of death in the fulness of life. They have forestalled their enemy, unmasked, baffled, and discomfited him. They have escaped forever: "Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the net of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped."

Thus they go bearing off to God, in the bloom of youth, their hearts, full of those treasures of deep love and complete self-renunciation which they refuse to man. They bury and consume their whole life in the hidden depths of voluntary renunciation, of unknown immolations.

When this is done, they assure us that they have found peace and joy, and in the sacrifice of themselves the perfection of love. They have kept their hearts for Him who never changes and never deceives; and in His service they find consolations which are worth all the price they have paid for them — joys which are not certainly unclouded, for then they would be without merit, but whose savor and fragrance will last to the grave.

It is not that they would forget or betray us whom they have loved, and who love them. No; the arrow which has pierced our hearts and remains there has first struck through theirs. They share with us the weight and bitterness of the sacrifice. Isolation from the world is not insensibility. It

is only a false spirituality which makes the soul hard, arrogant, and pitiless. When religion dries up or hardens the heart it is but a lying tyranny. Here, in true sacrifice, in supreme self-mortification, human affection loses none of its rights. They are all respected, but all purified, all transformed into an offering to God, who has promised to comfort us more than a mother — "So shalt thou be son of the Most High, and He shall love thee more than thy mother doeth." The warmth of tenderness, afflicted yet so pure, so straightforward, and so sure of itself, glows forth in every word, in every look. The blessedness of belonging to God will never close a noble heart to the griefs of others, or deprive it of any generous emotion. That heart becomes, on the contrary, more tender and more closely entwined to those it loves in proportion as it is entwined into a closer bond with the heart of Jesus.[210]

Is this a dream? — the page of a romance? Is it only history — the history of a past forever ended? No; once more, it is what we behold and what happens amongst us every day.

This daily spectacle we who speak have seen and undergone. What we had perceived only across past centuries and through old books, suddenly rose one day before our eyes, full of the tears of paternal anguish. Who will not pardon us for having, under the spell of that everlasting recollection, lengthened, perhaps unreasonably, this page of a long uncompleted work? How many others have also, like ourselves, gone through this anguish, and beheld with feelings unspeakable the last worldly apparition of a beloved sister or child?

One morning she rises, she comes to her father and mother — "Farewell! all is over," she says; "I am going to die — to die to you and to all. I shall never be either a wife or a

[210] "However firm might be the resolution of Theresa to leave her father, the tender affection she bore him rendered the separation heartbreaking to her. 'I believe,' she says, 'that at the point of death I could not suffer more than I did then. It seemed as if my very bones were dislocated, because my love of God was not strong enough to triumph wholly over the natural tenderness I had for my parents. I was obliged to do myself extreme violence in leaving them, and if the Lord had not helped me, my good resolutions would never have enabled me to follow out my plans to the end; but His goodness gave me courage against myself. At the moment when I took the habit, God made me conscious how he blesses those who deny themselves for His sake. This internal struggle was known to Him only; on the surface nothing appeared in my conduct but courage and firmness.'" — *Histoire de sa Vie*, c. iii. ap. Le Boucher.

mother; I am no more even your child — I am God's alone." Nothing can withhold her. "They immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him."[211] Lo! she comes already arrayed for the sacrifice, brilliant and lovely, with an angelic smile, fervent and serene, blooming and beaming, the crowning work of creation! Proud of her last beautiful attire, bright and brave, she ascends to the altar, or rather she rushes — she flies like a soldier to the breach, and, hardly able to keep down the impassioned ardor which consumes her, she bows her head under the veil which is to be a yoke upon her for the rest of her life, but which will also be her eternal crown.

It is done. She has crossed the gulf with that impetuous bound, that soaring impulse, that magnanimous self-forgetfulness, which is the glory of youth, with that pure and unconquerable enthusiasm which nothing here below will ever equal or extinguish.

Who then is this invisible Lover, dead upon a cross eighteen hundred years ago, who thus attracts to Him youth, beauty, and love? who appears to their souls clothed with a glory and a charm which they cannot withstand? who darts upon them at a stroke and carries them captive? who seizes on the living flesh of our flesh, and drains the purest blood of our blood? Is it a man? No: it is God. There lies the great secret, there the key of this sublime and sad mystery. God alone could win such victories, and deserve such sacrifices. Jesus, whose godhead is amongst us daily insulted or denied, proves it daily, with a thousand other proofs, by those miracles of self-denial and self-devotion which are called vocations. Young and innocent hearts give themselves to Him, to reward Him for the gift He has given us of Himself; and this sacrifice by which we are crucified is but the answer of human love to the love of that God who was crucified for us.

[211] Matth. iv. 22.

APPENDIX.

I.

IONA.

NOTES OF A VISIT MADE IN AUGUST 1862.

(See pages 29 and 120.)

"To each voyager
Some ragged child holds up for sale a store
Of wave-worn pebbles. . . .
How sad a welcome!
Where once came monk and nun with gentle stir
Blessings to give, news ask, or suit prefer. . . .
Think, proud philosopher!
Fallen though she be, this Glory of the West,
Still on her sons the beams of mercy shine;
And hopes, perhaps, more heavenly bright than thine,
A grace by thee unsought, and unpossesst,
A faith more fixed, a rapture more divine,
Shall gild their passage to eternal rest."

WORDSWORTH.

THE traveller who visits Iona in the hope of finding imposing ruins or picturesque sites is singularly disappointed in his expectation. Nothing, as has been already stated, can be less attractive than this island, at first sight at least. At view of its flat and naked surface a sense of that painful desolation which is so well expressed by the word *bleak*, untranslatable in French, strikes the traveller, and he involuntarily turns his eyes from that low and sandy shore to the lofty mountains of the neighboring isles and coasts. After a time, however, a sweet and salutary impression is evolved from the grave, calm, and lonely aspect of a place so celebrated in spiritual history. The spirit is a little reassured, and the visitor takes his way through the poor hamlet, which is the only inhabited place on the island, towards the ruins, of which so many learned and splendid descriptions have been written. Here again there is a fresh disappointment. These ruins have nothing about them that is imposing — nothing, above all, absolutely nothing, that recalls St. Columba, unless it be two or three inscriptions in the Irish tongue (*Eirsch* or *Erse*), which was his language. But they are not the less of great interest to the Catholic archæologist,

since they are all connected with the cloistral and ecclesiastical foundations which succeeded to the monastery of Columba. Turning to the north, after passing through the village, you come first to the remains of a convent of canonesses, the last foundation of the twelfth century, but which, for a little, survived the Reformation. Transformed into a stable, then into a quarry, the roofless church still exists; and in it is to be seen the tomb of the last prioress, Anna Macdonald, of the race of the *Lords of the Isles*, who died in 1543. Thence you pass to the famous cemetery, which was for so many centuries the last asylum of kings and princes nobles and prelates, and of the chiefs of the clans and communities of all the neighboring districts, and — as a report made in 1594 says — "of the best people of all the isles, and consequently the holiest and most honorable place in Scotland." At that epoch were still to be seen three great mausoleums with the following inscriptions: —

TUMULUS REGUM SCOTIÆ.
TUMULUS REGUM HIBERNIÆ.
TUMULUS REGUM NORWEGIÆ.

There was even the tomb of a king of France, whose name is not given, but who must have abdicated before his death.

Nothing is now shown of these mausoleums except the site. A tradition, more or less authentic, decides that eight Norwegian kings or princes were interred at Iona, four kings of Ireland, and forty eight Scottish kings. But all historians agree in stating that, from the fabulous times of Fergus until Macbeth, Iona was the ordinary burying-place of the kings and nobles of the Scottish race, and even of some Saxon princes, such as Egfrid, king of the Northumbrians, who died in 685.[1] Shakespeare, with his customary fidelity to national tradition, has not failed to send the body of Macbeth's victim to be buried at Iona.[2]

The burial-place of the kings was not transferred to the Abbey of Dunfermline until the time of Malcolm Canmore, the conqueror and successor of Macbeth, and the husband of St. Margaret.

At present this cemetery contains eight or nine rows of flat tombs very close to each other. Most of these are of blue stone, and covered with figures sculptured in relief, with inscriptions and coats of arms. On many of them may be distinguished the galley which was the heraldic ensign of the Macdonalds, *Lords of the Isles* — the greatest house of the north of Scotland. Among them is shown the tomb of the contemporary of the great king Robert

[1] "Ejus corpus in Hii insula Columbæ sepultum." — Simeon Dunelm, ap. Twyden, *Scriptor.*, p. 3.

[2] See the passage quoted, p. 114, note.

Bruce and the hero of the poem of Walter Scott, who died in 1387. And there are still to be seen tombs bearing the arms of the Macdougalls, Lords of Lorn, the Macleods, Mackinnons, Macquaries, and especially Macleans — that is to say, of all the chiefs of the clans of the adjacent districts, along with several tombs of bishops, priors, and other ecclesiastics of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

In the centre of the burying-ground stands a ruined chapel, called St. Oran's, from the name of the first of the Irish monks who died after their landing on the island. It is thirty feet long by fifteen broad, with a fine semicircular western door. It is the most interesting, and perhaps the oldest monument of the island, for it is held to have been built by the sainted Queen Margaret, wife of Malcolm Canmore († 1093), mother of the king St. David, one of the most touching figures in the history of Scotland and of Christendom. She was the regeneratrix of faith and piety in Scotland, and was animated by a great devotion to St. Columba, by whose intervention she obtained her only son, after having long been without children.[3]

Before reaching the burying-ground, and on leaving it, two large stone crosses are seen, each of a single block, and from twelve to fourteen feet high — the one called Maclean's, and the other St. Martin's — the only two which remain of three hundred and sixty, which are said to have formerly existed on the island. Both, fixed on a pedestal of red granite, are long and slender in form, covered over with sculptured ornaments, in a style at once graceful and quaint, partially hidden by the moss. One of them, Maclean's cross, is said to be that of which Adamnan speaks in his *Life of Columba*. It is difficult to understand how, with the scanty means at their disposal in an age so remote, it was possible to quarry, sculpture, transport, and erect blocks of granite of such a size.

At last we reach the Cathedral, or rather the Abbey Church, a large, oblong edifice, in red and gray granite, one hundred and sixty-six feet in length, seventy in breadth at the transept, ruined and roofless, like all the others, but still retaining all its walls, and also several large cylindrical columns, rudely sculptured, with the tombs of an abbot of the clan Mackinnon, date 1500, and different chiefs of the Macleans. Over the cross of the transept rises a square tower, which is seen far off at sea, and is lighted by windows pierced in the stone, in unglazed lozenges and circles, such as are still found at Villers, in Brabant, and at St. Vincent and Anastasius, near Rome.[4] The end of the choir is square, and can-

[3] Fordun, *Scoti-chronicon*. v. 37. Reeve's *Adamnan*, pp. xxx., cdx.

[4] See upon these stone windows the curious works of M. Albert Lenoir, in his *Architecture Monastique*, 1st part, pp. 133, 301, and of M. Ed. Didron, *Annales Archéologiques*, vol. xxiii. pp. 45, 201.

not be older than the fourteenth century; but other portions of the church are of the twelfth and thirteenth. It has, like the beautiful Abbey Church of Kelso, in the south of Scotland, this peculiarity, that the choir is twice as long as the nave.

The sombre and sad aspect of all these ruins is owing in part to the absence of all verdure, and of that ivy which, especially in the British Isles, adorns elsewhere the ruins of the past.

This church became, in the fourteenth century, the cathedral of the bishopric of the Isles, the titular bishop of which afterwards resided at *Man*, one of the *Sudereys* — that is, the isles lying south of the point of Ardnamurchan, and distinct from the *Norderneys*, to the north of that cape, a division which dates from the times of the Norwegians. Hence the title of *Episcopus Sodorensis*, Bishop of *Sodor and Man*. Iona became the cathedral of the bishopric of the Scottish Isles after the union of Man to England under Edward I.

After the Reformation, and the suppression of all the bishoprics and monasteries, decreed in 1561 by the Convention of Estates, the Calvinistic Synod of Argyll gave over all the sacred edifices of Iona to a horde of pillagers, who reduced them to the condition in which they are now seen. During the whole of the eighteenth century the ruins and the cemetery lay desert: the cathedral was made into a stable; and thus was accomplished the prophecy in Irish verse ascribed to Columba, according to which a time was to come when the chants of the monks should give place to the lowing of oxen. The three hundred and sixty crosses which covered the soil of the holy island disappeared during this period, most of them being thrown into the sea. Some were conveyed to Mull and to the adjacent islands, and one is shown at Campbelton — a monolith of blue granite, incrusted with sculptures. In this same island of Mull is to be observed a line of isolated columns leading to the point of embarkation for Iona, and destined, according to local tradition, to guide the pilgrims of old to the sacred isle. (Note of the Rev. T. Maclauchlan, read before the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, February, 1863.)

Since 1693 the island has belonged to the Dukes of Argyll, chiefs of the great clan Campbell, who watch over the preservation of the ruins. It brings them an annual revenue of about £300. It contains a population of three hundred and fifty souls, all Presbyterians. This small population — which lives on the produce of the fisheries and of a few wretched fields manured with seaweed, where potatoes, barley, and rye are grown, but where even oats refused to thrive — offers, notwithstanding, the curious spectacle which is found in many of even the prettiest villages in Scotland: it has two churches, and forms two congregations; the one connected with the *official* or *Established* worship, whose ministers are nominated by the lay patrons, and supported by the

ancient property of the Church; and the other attached to the "*Free Kirk*" — that is, a body whose ministers are elected by the people and maintained by their voluntary offerings.

The most interesting works to be consulted upon this celebrated island are, first of all, the Report of Archdeacon Munro in 1594; then Johnson's *Journey to the Hebrides;* Pennant's *Tour in the Hebrides;* N. D. Graham's *Antiquities of Iona,* London, 1850, in quarto, with plates; and finally, a good article in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* for November, 1861.

We cannot quit Iona without adding a word on the neighboring isle of Staffa, which contains the famous grotto of Fingal. It was not really known to the world till the visit of Sir Joseph Banks in August, 1772. There is no previous mention of it, not even in the journey of the great Johnson, although it lies within sight of Iona, which closes the horizon on the south, as seen from the cave — a juxtaposition which has inspired Walter Scott with these beautiful lines: —

> "Where, as to shame the temples decked
> By skill of earthly architect,
> Nature herself, it seems, would raise
> A Minster to her Maker's praise. . . .
> Nor doth its entrance front in vain
> To old Iona's holy fane,
> That nature's voice might seem to say,
> 'Well hast thou done, frail child of clay!
> Thy humble powers that stately shrine
> Tasked high and hard — but witness mine!'"

The English, and travellers in general, profess a great enthusiasm for this cave, which, as every one knows, forms an immense vault, into which the sea penetrates, and which rests on rows of polygonal basaltic columns, ranged like the cells of a beehive. Sir Robert Peel, in a speech in 1837, compared the pulsations of the Atlantic which roll into this sanctuary to the majestic tones of the organ; but he adds, "The solemn harmony of the waves chants the praises of the Lord in a note far more sublime than that of any human instrument." This sound is, in fact, the grandest thing about this famous cave. The rest is a wonder of nature far inferior, it seems to us, to the wonders of art, and especially of Christian art. The grotto of Fingal is but sixty-six feet high by forty-two broad, and two hundred and twenty-seven long. What is that beside our grand cathedrals and monastic churches, such as Cluny or Vezelay?

II.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE TWO PAPERS OF M. VARIN

ON THE CAUSES OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BRITISH CHURCH AND THE CHURCH OF ROME.

(*Recueil des Mémoires présentés par divers Savants à l'Académie des Inscriptions.* — 1st series, 1858.)

(See page 174.)

FIRST ARTICLE.

The struggle maintained by the three Celtic nations (Britons, Picts, and Scots) against the Roman apostles of the Saxon colony resulted, according to the opinion of the learned Anglicans of the last three centuries, from the fact that Britain had received the faith from Asia, and would thus have communicated anti-Roman doctrines to the Picts and Scots. The three populations, instructed by Asiatics, would naturally reject the religious yoke which Rome tried to lay on them (under the pretext of evangelizing the Anglo-Saxons) no less than the political yoke of the new conquerors. But,

1. There *never* was anything in common in the usages of Asia and those in which the three insular nations differed from the Roman Church.

2. The origin of these secondary differences, in as far as the Picts and Scots are concerned, is found in the subsequent substitution of British usages for those which, in the beginning, these same people received direct from Rome.

3. These usages, even among the Britons, did not extend back to the origin of Christianity in the British Isles. They had their sources in circumstances purely accidental, and completely opposed to any sentiment hostile to the Roman Church.

4. The Picts and Scots received the light of the gospel originally from Rome, and not from Britain. They already occupied at that period the ground which a school of learned men believe them only to have attained at a later date.

SECOND ARTICLE.

1. The differences between Rome and Britain were less *numerous*, less *important*, and, above all, of *later date* than the recent writers represent.

2. They indicate no relation between Britain and Asia.

3. They prove nothing against Rome: of the three nations which composed the British Church, *two* had from the first adopted the Roman usages.

4. As to the *six* controverted customs,

Three had their origin in a national, and not at all in an Asiatic feeling — to wit,

A. The *tonsure* — a national and even Druidic way of dressing the hair — that of the wise men, who are discussed in the lives of the Irish saints as opposing great obstacles to any modifications of the faith;

B. The national liturgy for the mass, such as existed in *all* the Churches evangelized by Rome, Gaul, Spain, &c.;

C. Aversion for the Roman clergy, repelled by patriotic sentiment, as apostles of the Saxon race;

And *three* in mistaken adhesion to the very doctrines of Rome:

D. The ceremonies supplementary to *baptism*, of which Bede speaks, ii. 2; but which the islanders would not recognize because their first apostles, who had come from Rome, had told them nothing about them;

E. The pascal *computation* (Easter), which the Britons maintained as they had received it at first from Rome without wishing to adopt the reform subsequently introduced by the Popes;

F. The celibacy of the clergy, as severely observed by the Britons as by the Roman clergy — only they accepted the double monasteries known in the East: and this is the only way in which any of the traditions of the East got a footing in the extreme West.

On the three principal points — 1, The supremacy of Rome; 2, The celebration of Easter; 3, The marriage of the priests — the British Church in no way differs from other Western Churches, — at least, during the first five centuries. On the three secondary points — 1, The tonsure; 2, The administration of baptism; 3, The liturgy — there were differences; but they were as great between Britain and the East as between Britain and Italy.

III.

LINDISFARNE.

(See page 235.)

Lindisfarne at present bears the name of *Holy Island*, which was given it in 1093 by the monks, then transferred to Durham, in memory of the number of monks who were massacred at the Danish invasion, and venerated as martyrs.

Except the dark and scarcely visible island, situated on the southwest, fifty fathoms from the shore, which is still called St. Cuthbert's Isle, and where it is said some remains of his cell are to be seen, the Holy Island of Lindisfarne retains no material trace either of the dwelling-place of the great and popular saint, or of the ancient monastic cathedral of Northumberland. But it possesses the important and very picturesque ruins of the church, rebuilt in 1093 by Bishop Carilef. This bishop immortalized himself by the construction of the magnificent Cathedral of Durham, of which the church of Lindisfarne, built of fine red stone like the churches on the Rhine, is a dependence. It is in the Roman or purest Norman style, except the choir and its rectangular heading, which were added in the thirteenth century. Its architect was the monk Eadward, so much praised by Reginald in his *Libellus de Miraculis Cuthberti*, and who brought from the neighboring city, with the eager aid of the inhabitants, the good stone which was wanting at Lindisfarne, that of the island being too friable, and apt to be destroyed by the sea-spray. A double diagonal arch, ornamented with rich toothed mouldings, is the only remaining relic of the central vault of the transept, between the nave and choir. This arch, thrown from the north-western to the south-eastern corner, with the appearance of being suspended in the air, traces its outline upon the sky with boldness and majesty. It is four-and-twenty English feet in diameter, and rises to a height of forty-four feet above the ground, which is itself heightened by ruins. The lower side of the north is still entire, as well as two bays of the same side of the nave, which was composed of six. The ancient choir ended in a circular apse; the half of it remains, disfigured and mutilated by a square heading in materials different from the rest. The transept has two circular apses, in the same style as the choir. The reverse of the western front, in the interior of the church, has a fine effect. The entire ruin is very well rendered in the *Architectural Antiquities of Durham*, by Billings.

Some remains of the ancient monastery are still to be seen round the church. A fine fortress of the sixteenth century, built

under Queen Elizabeth, occupies a conical mole at the southern extremity of the island.

A very minute description of Lindisfarne is to be found in the work of the learned James Raine, entitled *The History and Antiquities of North Durham*, or the shires of Norham, Island, and Bedlington, now united in the county of Northumberland: London, 1852. The article *Holy Island* is very long: it goes into minute details of the priory founded there in 1095, and is accompanied by an engraving made in 1728 by Buck, and which shows the state of the ruins at that period: they do not seem to have been more considerable then than at present.

Bamborough, the ancient residence of the kings of Northumbria, situated on the shore in sight of Lindisfarne, is placed on an immense rock, which commands the sea and all the surrounding country; the castle, much modernized, has been made by Lord Crewe into a charitable school and various establishments devoted to the work of salvage, which is so necessary and so energetically directed upon that dangerous coast.

I cannot resist the temptation of quoting here Walter Scott's fine lines, which will console the reader for the dryness of the preceding details, and which exactly depict the site of Lindisfarne except in respect to the grandeur of the ruins: the English are disposed to exaggerate the effect of the size of their historical monuments, which are almost always less than our own.

" And now the vessel skirts the strand
Of mountainous Northumberland.
. . . . .
Thy tower, proud Bamborough, marked they there,
King Ida's castle, huge and square,
From its tall rock look grimly down,
And on the swelling ocean frown;
Then from the coast they bore away,
And reached the Holy Island's bay.
The tide did now its flood-mark gain,
And girdled in the Saint's domain:
For, with the flow and ebb, its style
Varies from continent to isle;
Dry-shod, o'er sands, twice every day,
The pilgrims to the shrine find way:
Twice every day the waves efface
Of staves and sandalled feet the trace.
As to the port the galley flew,
Higher and higher rose to view
The castle with its battled walls,
The ancient monastery's halls,
A solemn, huge, and dark-red pile,
Placed on the margin of the isle.
In Saxon strength that Abbey frowned,
With massive arches broad and round,

That rose alternate, row and row,
On ponderous columns, short and low,
Built ere the art was known,
By pointed aisle, and shafted stalk,
The arcades of an alley walk
To emulate in stone.
On the deep walls, the heathen Dane
Had poured his impious rage in vain;
And needful was such strength to these,
Exposed to the tempestuous seas,
Scourged by the winds' eternal sway,
Open to rovers fierce as they,
Which could twelve hundred years withstand
Wind, waves, and northern pirates' hand.
Not but that portions of the pile,
Rebuilded in a later style,
Showed where the spoiler's hand had been;
Not but the wasting sea-breeze keen
Had worn the pillar's carving quaint,
And mouldered in his niche the saint,
And rounded, with consuming power,
The pointed angles of each tower;
Yet still entire the Abbey stood,
Like veteran, worn but unsubdued."

— *Marmion*, cant. 2.

IV.

PETERBOROUGH.

(See page 333.)

This celebrated monastery has been the origin of an important town in Northamptonshire, which sends two members to the House of Commons, and was made into a bishopric of the Anglican Church by Henry VIII. The last abbot became bishop in 1541, and the abbey church was transformed into the cathedral of the new bishopric — an arrangement which still continues.

Peterborough was built on an isle in the marshy district which, at the time of the Saxon occupation, included a considerable portion of the existing counties of Northampton, Cambridge, Lincoln, and Norfolk, and which is still known as *the Fens*. There existed in these marshes some spots more solid, which could even be made into pasturage, and the industry of the monks soon brought them under cultivation. From this is derived the primitive name of Peterborough, *Medehamstede*, or, in modern English, *the Home in the Meadows*. Such was also the origin of the still celebrated abbeys of Ely and Croyland, and of several others, Ramsey, Thorney, Kirkstead, &c. This district is now one of the most fertile parts of England.

There are no remains existing of the church of the monastery built in the seventh century by the kings of the Mercians. The Danes destroyed it at their great invasion in 870, after having slaughtered all the monks. It was rebullt a century later, and again dedicated to St. Peter by the famous Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, but afterwards destroyed by accidental fires in 1067 and in 1116. It was in 1118, after the last of these fires, that the present building was commenced by the abbot John of Seez: the choir was consecrated in 1143, and the chapels, to the east of the transept, from 1133 to 1145, under a very distinguished abbot, Martin du Bec. The existing nave, begun in 1155, was not finished till towards 1190. The aisles of the nave date from 1117 and 1143.

Like all English cathedrals, Peterborough has preserved its vast dependencies, and stands in the midst of gardens, flowery lawns, and groves, which heighten its grandeur and beauty. The tranquil majesty of the close which surrounds it naturally recalls to mind its monastic origin; the silence and serenity which reign there are scarcely disturbed, except by the flight or the song of birds, whose nests are built in the towers and buttresses of the immense church. The great and numerous buildings which shut in this close seem to reproduce, in part at least, the cloi-

ters of the great abbey before its secularization. The entrance from the town into the sacred enclosure is by a gateway, in the form of a square tower, pierced by an arched passage, and surmounted by a chapel dedicated to St. Nicholas, but used at present as a music school. To the left is another chapel, dedicated to St. Thomas-à-Becket, which serves for the use of the choristers. Beyond this gateway is the spacious enclosure surrounding the church; to the right and to the south is the old abbatial palace — now the bishop's — built in 1319, its grand entrance flanked by two statues, larger than life, of an abbot and a monk. To the left and north is the deanery, a fine building of the date of 1518. But the eyes of visitors are at once attracted and enchanted by the magnificent western façade of the abbey church. This façade, built between 1200 and 1227, in the early ogival style, called in England *Early English*, is equally original and splendid; it is said, not without reason, to have no equal among the specimens of Christian architecture. It is composed of three porches or ogival doorways, equal in height, which occupy the whole elevation of the façade; they are surrounded by three triangular gables or frontals, and flanked north and south by two square towers of great elegance, with spires. The depth of these doorways is as astonishing as their height; the sides of the inner walls and the whole of the façade are lavishly enriched with sculpture, and decorated wherever it is possible with bays and roses in the finest style. The whole effect is truly wonderful, thanks to the immense dimensions of this triple porch and the masses of light and shade caused by the depths of the arches.

The two façades of the grand transept, to the north and south, flanked by polygonal turrets, and of Roman or Norman architecture, are also extremely beautiful. Nothing can be finer than the north façade with its seven tiers of arches and vaulted bays. This façade is, externally, the best preserved and most interesting part of the ancient Norman church, which is there seen without the disfigurement of those additions in the perpendicular or flamboyant style which have been made to the aisles of the nave, the mullions of the triforium, the circumference of the choir, and even in certain parts of the great western façade.

The circular apse of the primitive church may also be seen rising above the quadrilateral oblong which was added in the sixteenth century, and in spite of the disparity caused by the flamboyant architecture of the great windows of this apse, its effect is still remarkable. Besides the great transept, situated between the choir and the nave, there is another of smaller dimensions, situated between the nave and the western façade, and flanked by four turrets, two with battlemented terraces, and two with spires, already mentioned in reference to the principal façade. It has also a central tower, which is low and ungraceful, and which,

moreover, is decorated at the four corners with those hideous bell towers which disfigure a large proportion of English steeples.

Peterborough Cathedral thus possesses a great number of towers and turrets, but their want of height diminishes their effect; and this is the case also with the whole of the roof, which, as in most English cathedrals, is so low as to wound the eye by the absence of that perfect proportion between the height and length of the building to which we are accustomed in those of France and Germany.

But whatever may be wanting to the exterior of Peterborough is fully compensated by the majestic and solemn beauty of the interior. I remember no church in the world whose whole aspect is, at the first glance, more striking. Every detail appears to be of the purest Roman or Norman art. And it is so especially in the central nave, which is of extraordinary length,[5] with eleven bays (Notre Dame in Paris has only seven) divided by huge columns alternately round and octangular. The roof, instead of being vaulted, has a ceiling of wood, believed to be of the same date as the edifice, and covered with old paintings, recalling those lately restored with such success in the Church of St. Godehard at Hildesheim. The triforium, of which each bay is composed only of a pointed arch, is of a grand simplicity, and neutralizes the unfortunate effect of the flamboyant windows of the clerestory, the pointed bays of which are besides even lower than those of the triforium.

The aisles of the nave are in the same style, but with vaulted roofs in stone; their inner walls are entirely covered with vaulted and interlaced arches: unfortunately the windows of these aisles have been modernized in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

The grand transept is also in the finest Norman style, and rivals the nave in size and magnificence; it has four bays in each arm, and six of these bays open on six chapels arranged parallel to the choir, in the manner of the Cistercian churches. The two façades of this transept, to the north and south, are pierced with three rows of vaulted bays, with mullions and trefoils.

The choir has four bays, and ends in an apse in four parts. But this apse itself is imbedded in a vast oblong construction much lower than the rest of the church. Here we find again the unpleasing fashion of finishing the finest churches with a parallelogram, to which English architects have always had a leaning, and which gives to their buildings a character so inferior to ours. This addition, called the Lady Chapel, was built in 1496. It has a richly sculptured vault of the special form of the English build

[5] It is 266 English feet in length, 35 wide, and 85 high. The total length of the church is 479 feet; the western façade is 156. The lantern of the central tower is only 135 feet high.

ings of that period, such as may be seen at King's College, Cambridge, and at Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster.

Within the choir is the oldest monument in the church, that of Abbot Hedda, massacred by the Danes in 870. It is in the form of a shrine, with statues of our Lord and the twelve apostles in bas-relief. It is attributed to Goodric, who was abbot from 1099 to 1103.

A little further on may be seen the gravestone, scarcely visible, of Catherine of Arragon, the first wife of Henry VIII., and opposite the place where the body of Mary Stuart was buried after her execution at the neighboring Castle of Fotheringay, and where it remained until her son James I. removed it to Westminster. These two great victims to the Reformation thus slept together in the old abbatial church of Peterborough, while the wicked and sanguinary Elizabeth finished her triumphal reign in peace.

This beautiful church cannot give us an idea of the buildings of Anglo-Saxon times; but it represents in all their majesty the great constructions of one of the greatest epochs of monastic history, that of the twelfth century, the era of St. Bernard and Peter the Venerable.[6]

I reserve for another volume my notes on the present state of two other monasteries, Croyland and Ely, which, from their commencement, were reckoned among the most celebrated in England, but the great splendor of which was later than the epoch of which I have hitherto spoken.

July, 1862.

[6] An abridged history of this great monastery may be found in the biographical notes on its abbots, published by Stevens, *Continuation of Dugdale;* London, 1722, vol. i. p. 496. I take this occasion of recommending to all lovers of Christian antiquities this excellent work, full of curious information and of zeal against the sacrilegious profaners of the Catholic monuments and institutions of England.

V.

HEXHAM.

(See page 365.)

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH BUILT AT THE MONASTERY OF HEXHAM BY ST. WILFRID FROM 674 TO 680.

"Igitur profunditatem ipsius ecclesiæ criptis et oratoriis subterraneis, et viarum anfractibus inferius cum magna industria fundavit.

"Parietes autem quadratis et bene politis columpnis suffultos et tribus tabulatis distinctos, immensæ longitudinis et altitudinis, erexit. Ipsos etiam et capitella columpnarum quibus sustentantur et arcum sanctuarii, historiis et ymaginibus et variis cœlaturarum figuris ex lapide prominentibus et picturarum et colorum grata varietate mirabilique decore decoravit. Ipsum quoque corpus ecclesiæ appentitiis et porticibus nardique circumdixit quæ, miro atque inexplicabili artificio, per parietes et cocleas inferius et superius distinxit. In ipsis vero cocleis,[7] et super ipsas, ascensoria ex lapide, et deambulatoria, et varios viarum amfractus, modo sursum, modo deorsum, artificiosissime ita machinari fecit, et innumera hominum multitudo ibi existere et ipsum corpus ecclesiæ circumdare possit, cum a nemine tamen infra in eo existentium videri queat. Oratoriaque quam plurima, superius et inferius, secretissima et pulcherrima, in ipsis porticibus cum maxima diligentia et cautela constituit, in quibus altaria in honore Beatæ Dei genetricis semperque Virginis Mariæ, et sancti Michaelis Archangeli, sanctique Johanis Baptistæ et sanctorum Apostolorum, Martyrum, Confessorum, atque Virginum, cum eorum apparatibus, honestissime præparari fecit. Unde etiam, usque hodie, quædam illorum ut turres et propugnacula, supereminent. Atrium quoque templi magnæ spissitudinis et fortitudinis muro circumvallavit. Præter quem in alveo lapideo aquæductus, ad usus officinorum, per mediam villam decurrebat."[8]

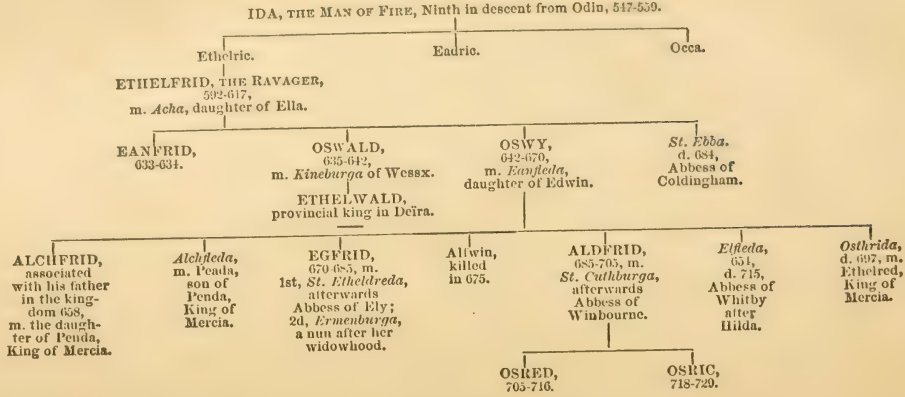
[7] Ducange, at the word *Cochlea*, says: "Cochleæ sunt altæ et rotundæ turres, et dictæ cochleæ quasi cycleæ, quod in eis, tanquam per circulum orbemque, conscendatur."

[8] Richardi Prioris *Historia Hagulstadensis Ecclesiæ*, c. iii., ap. Twysden, *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores Decem*, and Raine's *Priory of Hexham*, p. 11.

VI.

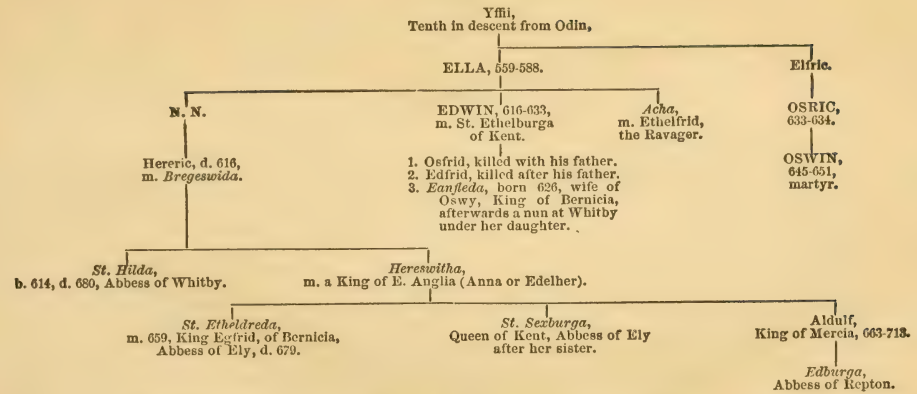
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF NORTHUMBRIA.

BERNICIAN DYNASTY.


IDA, THE MAN OF FIRE, Ninth in descent from Odin, 547-559.
Ethelric.
Eadric.
Occa.
ETHELFRID, THE RAVAGER, 592-617, m. Acha, daughter of Ella.
EANFRID, 633-634.
OSWALD, 635-642, m. Kineburga of Wessx.
ETHELWALD, provincial king in Deïra.
OSWY, 642-670, m. Eanfleda, daughter of Edwin.
St. Ebba. d. 684, Abbess of Coldingham.
ALCHFRID, associated with his father in the kingdom 658, m. the daughter of Penda, King of Mercia.
Alchfleda, m. Peada, son of Penda, King of Mercia.
EGFRID, 670-685, m. 1st, St. Etheldreda, afterwards Abbess of Ely; 2d, Ermenburga, a nun after her widowhood.
Alfwin, killed in 675.
ALDFRID, 685-705, m. St. Cuthburga, afterwards Abbess of Winbourne.
Elfleda, 654, d. 715, Abbess of Whitby after Hilda.
Osthrida, d. 697, m. Ethelred, King of Mercia.
OSRED, 705-716.
OSRIC, 718-729.

The names in capitals are the names of kings who reigned over Northumbria.
The dates placed after these names show the beginning and close of their reign.
The names in italics are those of queens and princesses.

DEIRIAN DYNASTY



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF NORTHUMBRIA AT THIS PERIOD.

547. Ida.
559. Ella.
592. Ethelfrid.
616. Edwin.

633. Osric and Eanfrid.
635. Oswald.
642. Oswy and Oswin.
651. Oswy alone.

670. Egfrid.
685. Aldfrid.
705. Osred.

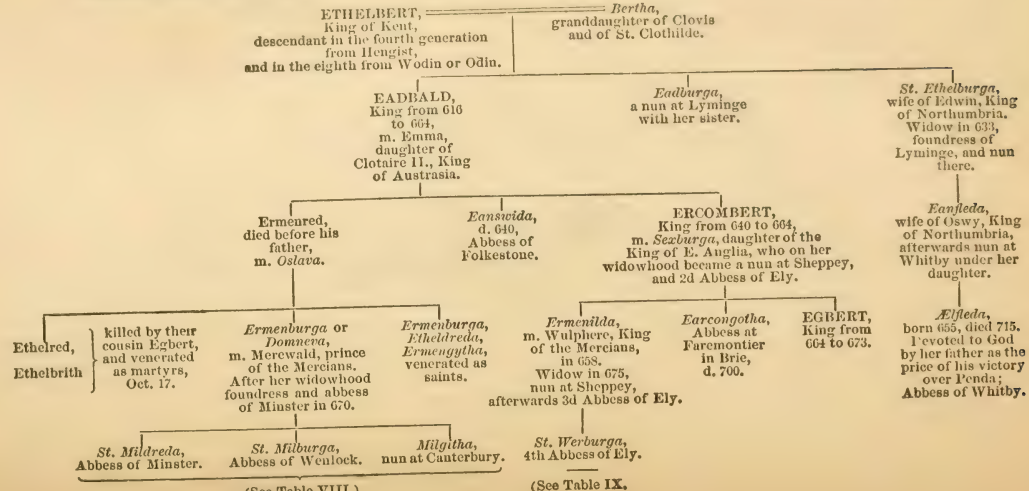
716. Ceonred, son of Occa, son of Ida the Burner.
718. Osric, brother of Osred.
729. Ceolwulf, brother of Ceonred.

737. Eadbert, descended from Eadric, another son of Ida, and brother of Archbishop Egbert, the correspondent of Bede.

VII.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE

OF NUNS DESCENDED FROM THE RACE OF HENGIST AND DYNASTY OF THE ÆSCINGS, KINGS OF KENT.


ETHELBERT, King of Kent, descendant in the fourth generation from Hengist, and in the eighth from Wodin or Odin.
Bertha, granddaughter of Clovis and of St. Clothilde.
EADBALD, King from 616 to 664, m. Emma, daughter of Clotaire II., King of Austrasia.
Eadburga, a nun at Lyminge with her sister.
St. Ethelburga, wife of Edwin, King of Northumbria. Widow in 633, foundress of Lyminge, and nun there.
Eanfleda, wife of Oswy, King of Northumbria, afterwards nun at Whitby under her daughter.
Ælfleda, born 655, died 715. Devoted to God by her father as the price of his victory over Penda; Abbess of Whitby.
Ermenred, died before his father, m. Oslava.
Eanswida, d. 640, Abbess of Folkestone.
ERCOMBERT, King from 640 to 664, m. Sexburga, daughter of the King of E. Anglia, who on her widowhood became a nun at Sheppey, and 2d Abbess of Ely.
Ethelred, Ethelbrith
killed by their cousin Egbert, and venerated as martyrs, Oct. 17.
Ermenburga or Domneva, m. Merewald, prince of the Mercians. After her widowhood foundress and abbess of Minster in 670.
Ermenburga, Ethelredra, Ermengytha, venerated as saints.
Ermenilda, m. Wulphere, King of the Mercians, in 658. Widow in 675, nun at Sheppey, afterwards 3d Abbess of Ely.
Earcongotha, Abbess at Faremontier in Brie, d. 700.
EGBERT, King from 664 to 673.
St. Mildreda, Abbess of Minster.
St. Milburga, Abbess of Wenlock.
Milgitha, nun at Canterbury.
St. Werburga, 4th Abbess of Ely.
(See Table VIII.)
(See Table IX.

VIII.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE

OF NUNS DESCENDED FROM THE DYNASTY OF THE KINGS OF MERCIA.

CRIDDA,
tenth in descent from Odin, founder of the kingdom of the Angles in Mercia, 585.

PYBBA or WIBBA, King from 593 to 596.

PENDA, King from 626 to 655.

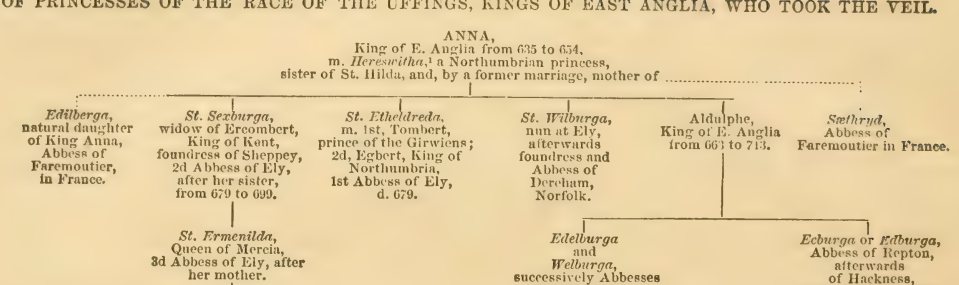
- **PEADA**, first Christian of Mercia, King of the Middle Angles, d. 657.
- **WULPHERE**, King from 656 to 675, m. *Ermenilda*, d. of the King of Kent, Abbess of Ely after her widowhood.
  - *St. Werburga*, nun at Ely, afterwards Abbess of Weedon, of Trentham, of Hanbury, and of Ely; patroness of Chester, whither she was removed in 875.
  - **CEONRED**, King in 704, monk in 709 at Rome, with King Offa of Essex.
- **MERWALD**, Prince of Ealdorman of the Mercians, m. *Domneva* or *Ermenberga* of Kent.
  - *St. Milburga*, Abbess of Wenlock.
  - *St. Mildreda*, or *Mildritha*, Abbess of Minster.
  - *Milgitha*, nun at Canterbury.
- *St. Kyneburga*, m. Alchfrid, King of Northumbria, but remains a virgin and becomes a nun. 1st Abbess of Gloucester.
- *St. Kyneswitha*, sought by Offa, King of Essex, but persuaded him to become a monk.
- *Wilburga*, m. the *subregulus* of Surrey, and with him founds the Monastery of Chertsey.
- **ETHELRED**, King in 675, m. Ostryda of Northumbria. Monk and Abbot of Bardeney in 704, d. 715.
  - **CEOLRED**, King in 709, becomes a monk at Rome in 716.
- *Eadburga*, Abbess of Dortmuncester, d. 680 according to the English Martyrology.

The dates and references on which these tables are founded, are drawn chiefly from Lappenberg, who has with reason given great importance to the origin of the Saxon dynasties, founding them on the lists given by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Florent of Worcester, Nennius, &c. We have revised and completed these from Bede and the Bollandists. The latter have disputed many traditions received by earlier writers.

IX.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE

OF PRINCESSES OF THE RACE OF THE UFFINGS, KINGS OF EAST ANGLIA, WHO TOOK THE VEIL.

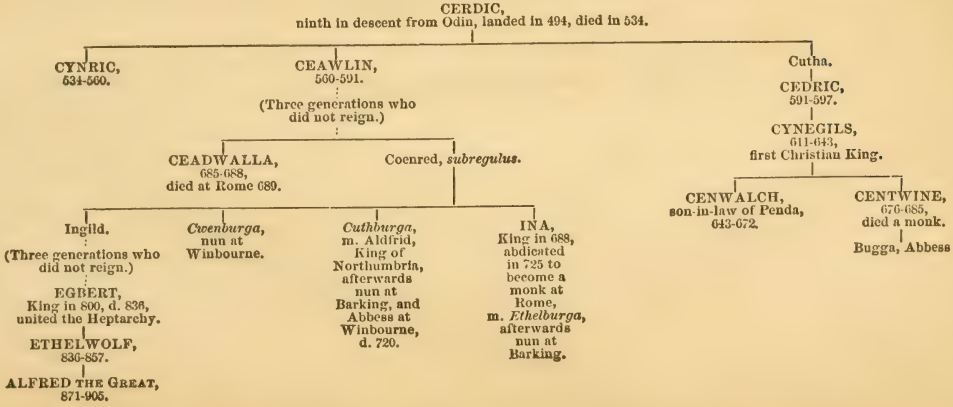

ANNA,
King of E. Anglia from 635 to 654.
m. Hereswitha,[1] a Northumbrian princess,
sister of St. Hilda, and, by a former marriage, mother of
Edilberga, natural daughter of King Anna, Abbess of Faremoutier, in France.
St. Sexburga, widow of Ercombert, King of Kent, foundress of Sheppey, 2d Abbess of Ely, after her sister, from 679 to 699.
St. Ermenilda, Queen of Mercia, 3d Abbess of Ely, after her mother.
St. Werburga, 4th Abbess of Ely.
(See Table VIII.)
St. Etheldreda, m. 1st, Tombert, prince of the Girwiens; 2d, Egbert, King of Northumbria, 1st Abbess of Ely, d. 679.
St. Wilburga, nun at Ely, afterwards foundress and Abbess of Dereham, Norfolk.
Aldulphe, King of E. Anglia from 663 to 713.
Sæthryd, Abbess of Faremoutier in France.
Edelburga and Welburga, successively Abbesses of Hackness, founded by St. Hilda, their great-aunt.
Ecburga or Edburga, Abbess of Repton, afterwards of Hackness, friend of St. Guthlac

[1] According to some authors, Hereswitha married, not Anna, but his brother Edelher, who was the father of King Aldulphe. (Cf. BEDE, iv. 23; *Liber Eliensis*, p. 15; LAPPENBERG, p. 237.)

X.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE KINGS OF WESSEX.

(DIRECT LINE, OMITTING KINGS DESCENDED FROM COLLATERAL BRANCHES.)



MONTALEMBERT, COUNT DE

The Monks of the West

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